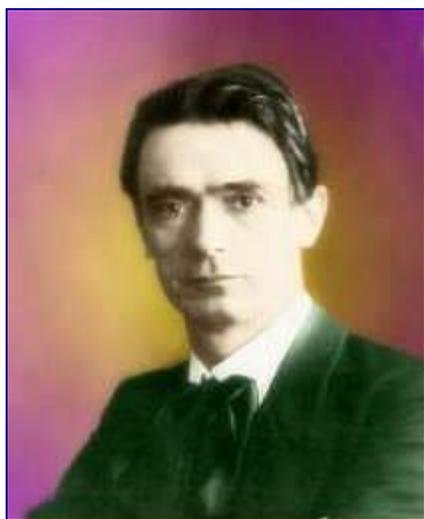


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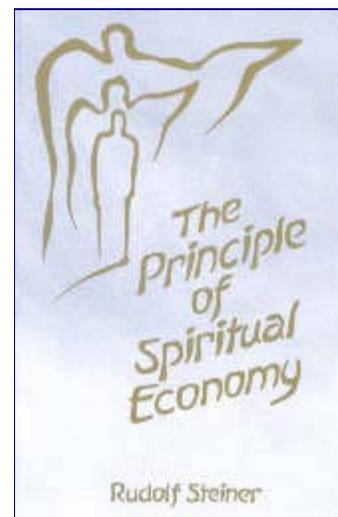


A READER'S JOURNAL

The Principle of Spiritual Economy, GA# 109

by
Rudolf Steiner

In Connection with Questions of Reincarnation
An Aspect of the Spiritual Guidance of Man
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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2003



The translator, Peter Mollenhauer, provides us with an Introduction in which he explains the title's theme of spiritual economy. He says that it "is directly related to Steiner's investigations about the 'spiritual guidance of human beings' and later lectures dealing with karma" and reincarnation. As a physicist, I read these lectures as if they were about a conservation law of the spiritual world. We have in the physical world the respected "Law of Conservation of Energy" which states that, in any closed system, energy cannot be created or destroyed, only changed from one form to another. In the spiritual world, as Steiner enlightens us in these lectures, there is a conservation of not only the immortal human "I" or Ego, but for certain spiritually advanced human beings, even their etheric and astral bodies are conserved for further use in another form or human body. Mollenhauer also points to the excerpt from Steiner's Autobiography, *The Course of My Life*, to explain the difference between material written for reading and material transcribed from lectures, such as the lectures that comprise this book:

[page 163] The exclusively public writings are the result of what struggled and was at work in me, whereas in the privately printed material [RJM: such as his transcribed lectures] the society joins me in my struggle and labor. When it does, I listen to the pulsations in the soul-life of the members and as I vividly partake in what they have to say, the lecture takes shape.

As a result of the difference in the thrust of his written versus his spoken words, translators have to take into account the connotative quality of words, phrases, and sentences and render them into the English of contemporary American speakers. (paraphrase of Mollenhauer's words on page xi.) He cautions the reader to be aware that this process is one of approximation and a confirmation of Wilhelm von Humboldt's dictum that "all understanding is also a misunderstanding." This thought of Humboldt's matches the famous dictum of the founder of General Semantics, Alfred O. Korzybski, who said, "The map is not the territory; it does not represent all the territory." One can rightly understand this to say that Steiner's spoken lectures comprised the territory of which Mollenhauer's translation is but a map. A very good map, but a map - a map that cannot represent all of the territory, but nevertheless a map that provides a useful guide to his thoughts on the subject of these lectures on spiritual economy. The more one is familiar with the territory that a map represents, the more the map will be useful in finding one's way around. The same is true for those who listen to Steiner's lectures or read transcriptions of them - if one is familiar with the content of

his spiritual science already, one will readily be able to navigate around the Scylla and Charybdis obstacles of the transcription and translation of his lectures on the subject.

One can easily be drowned in the Charybdis whirlpool of the following sentence from the beginning paragraph or opening topic of the very first lecture.

[page 1] What today we do not merely believe but perceive as truths that are *beyond* the realm of faith used to be incredible to us in earlier days and today still appears as fantastic nonsense or reverie to outsiders.

If I may hazard a re-statement to help clarify Steiner's meaning: First we must accept that there are truths that are beyond the realm of faith, truths that we *perceive*, not *believe*. These truths seemed unbelievable (in-credible) to us in earlier days, so we must naturally not be surprised if those who are new to these truths today should label them as "fantastic nonsense or reverie". If your impression at any point in this review is that this is nonsensical folderol, perhaps you would better served if you stopped reading it and studied some of Rudolf Steiner's earlier books such as *An Outline of Occult Science* or *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and Their Attainment*.

Think of a papaya tree, but any tropical plant or tree will suffice for this metaphor. After a freeze, the tree becomes a corpse, its trunk dissolves, it separates into water and a papery tube as the etheric body that kept it alive leaves it. The collapsed tube lays on the ground, a corpse, with no life left in it. If we have removed the papaya fruit before the freeze, the fruit of the tree can live to create a new papaya tree in the next season. This is something we perceive, not something that we would say that we believe, even though it has the air of the incredible about it if we think deeply on the subject of how a pea-sized black seed might grow into an eighteen foot papaya tree in a mere nine months.

When a human dies, the body becomes a corpse when the etheric, astral, and Ego bodies leave it. [During sleep, only the Ego and astral bodies leave and the etheric and physical bodies remain behind.] Like the papaya tree, there is only dead tissue and body remnants left behind; in other words, the physical bodies of the dead papaya tree and of the dead human both dissolve into the physical body of Earth.

What is the human equivalent of the fruit of the papaya, however? Even though humans are more evolved than papaya trees, there is a human equivalent of the fruit of the papaya tree. We said the etheric body of the dead papaya tree is gone, but when we inspect the fruit that we removed earlier, we find that there is incipient life - an etheric body - inside of the fruit, a fact that we can easily confirm by planting its seeds in the Earth and watching it grow. The papaya is simpler than the human - it has only etheric and physical bodies. The plant adds an etheric body to the purely physical body of the mineral. The animal adds an astral body. The human adds an "I" or Ego body to its astral, etheric and physical bodies. This represents the condition of minerals, plants, animals, and humans during the current [Earth epoch of evolution](#).

With this prologue, dear Reader, you are ready to read the following passage and perceive the spiritual realities that infuse your life. Steiner is describing what happens when one dies. First the etheric, astral, and Ego bodies leave the physical body with the etheric and Ego bodies nestled inside of the astral body. Directly one experiences a memory tableau of one's life for the longest time that one stayed awake during one's life, about two days for the average person. In this tableau one sees as in a diorama the events of one's life spread out before one's eyes all of a piece, one's life from beginning to end spread out before one. Time becomes space in the tableau.

[page 2] Then the etheric body leaves the astral body, in which the ego is living. All three had been connected from the time they left the physical corpse, but now the etheric body separates itself from the other two and becomes an etheric corpse. However, today's human beings do not lose their etheric body completely but take an extract or excerpt along with them for all the times to follow. So in this sense the etheric corpse is cast off, but the fruit of the last life is carried along by the astral body and by the ego. If we want to be quite precise, we will have to say that something is taken along from the physical

body as well: a kind of spiritual abstract of this body - the tincture medieval mystics spoke about. However, this abstract of the physical being is the same in all lives; it merely represents the fact that the ego had been embodied. On the other hand, the essence of the etheric body is different in all lives, depending on what one has experienced in a life and on the degree of one's progress in it.

If one produces fruit in one's life, then the spiritual economy conserves that fruit for a later life, similar to the papaya with its seeds. As the owner of a papaya tree that is very fruitful, a tree that makes plump and delicious fruit, one would be more likely to plant the seeds of that papaya than the seeds of papaya trees that made small, hard, or inedible fruit. This point is best kept in mind as one reads later about the etheric and astral bodies of spiritually advanced human beings that are preserved by the spiritual world for later use in future incarnations. In this thought lies the essence of what Steiner refers to as spiritual economy.

After the memory tableau, which precedes the separation of the etheric from the astral body, comes a longer period of time, equal to the amount of time one spent sleeping during one's entire lifetime, during which the astral body takes its gradual leave of the Ego body. This is the trying period referred to by Christians as Purgatory and by spiritual science as *kamaloca*, a word taken from the religions of the East.

[page 3] There follows the condition of what is called *kamaloca*, the time of weaning the soul from the effects of physical, sensuous experiences, which lasts about a third of the time of a person's physical life. After the etheric body has been cast off, the astral body still contains the passions, desires, and so on that it had at the end of life; they must be lost and purified, and that is *kamaloca*. Then the astral body is cast off and here, too, the fruit, the astral essence, is taken along; but the rest - the astral corpse - dissolves into the astral world. The human being now enters *devachan* where he or she prepares in the spiritual world for a new life in the future. Here human beings live with spiritual events and beings until they are again called into the physical world, be it because the karma of a person demands it or because an individual is needed on the physical earth.

There is the progression of the human soul, the immortal "I" or Ego body, from life to death and back to life, described as a very general process - a process, not to be believed in, but one to be perceived as a truth. It is this process of perceiving that distinguishes spiritual science as a science, distinguishes it from a religion. Religions, rightly understood, are necessarily grounded in belief and faith.

How does one perceive something that one cannot perceive? If you've ever taken a piece of electronic gear to be repaired to a service man, you may know that he is able to hook up your video cassette recorder (VCR) to an oscilloscope, perceive signals that extend only microseconds in time, and make adjustments based on what he perceives to repair your VCR. One does not need to believe in those signals if one has a technician who can see them with his instrument and make adjustments. One grasps, comprehends, or perceives that the signals have a reality based on the logical and fruitful results produced by the service man. Electronics, to say it another way, is a science based on perceptions, not a religion based on belief. In a similar way, Rudolf Steiner perceived spiritual realities and reported them to us in a consistent way that one can confirm on one's own, and he called the knowledge of how to perceive the realities he perceived, *spiritual science*. Whether one becomes a service technician of spiritual science, like Steiner did, or not, one can grasp the truths of his spiritual science from their fruitfulness and logical consistency in explaining the matters of the world we know, both its physical and spiritual realities. This should not be taken as a statement of fact but as a challenge - because any one who is the least bit skeptical about that statement may check it out for oneself. If one needs to see the oscilloscope before one will accept the reality of the repaired VCR, there are books and schools to teach one to use and read the oscilloscope. Similar modes are available in the field of spiritual science, and have been available since the majority of humans first began to lose direct perception of the spiritual world.

Lest one shrug off the realities involved, this next passage should disabuse one quickly of any notion that these realities are easy to comprehend.

[page 4] The [sun] consists of spiritual beings who make use of the physical sun much in the same way as human beings make use of the earth.

In time before the flood on Earth, it was the job of the spiritual science schools or "oracles," as they were called, to teach spiritual science to the initiates, and the most important oracle was the Sun Oracle, who taught about the reality of the beings in the Sun. Today we would call that same oracle the Christ Oracle as both oracles refer to the same great Sun Being. I remind you, dear Reader, of my admonition not to proceed further in this review if you have not grasped the reality of the Christ as residing in the Sun. If you, like Saul on the road to Damascus, must doubt this reality till you have directly perceived it, there is a clear path for you to follow to achieve this result, but explaining how to do it is outside the scope of this review. I refer you again to Steiner's basic books, *An Outline of Occult Science* or *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and Their Attainment*.

The etheric bodies of the seven great oracles of the pre-flood time were preserved or conserved similar to how we might preserve the seeds of our seven best papaya trees to ensure that we might have equally good papayas after the next freeze. Eventually through migration, the seven preserved etheric bodies of the great teachers ended up in seven sages in India called the Rishis. These etheric bodies can be thought of as molds such as those on the rings of kings. A king would press his signet ring into the freshly poured wax covering the flap of the envelope or scroll, and his signature was thus imprinted or sealed into the physical body of his communication. In a like manner, the preserved etheric bodies of earlier humans are impressed or imprinted into later human beings as part of the spiritual economy. One must understand that this process of spiritual economy leads to surprising and oft times confusing results when one examines the evidence for reincarnation. One cannot help but think of the case of Bridey Murphy that gained such notoriety in the 20th Century when one reads the next passage.

[page 7] Not all etheric bodies dissolve after death, but some of those that are especially useful are transferred to other human beings. But the "I" of the individual receiving the etheric or astral body is not at all identical with the ego of the donor. Disregarding this fact can easily lead to great misconceptions on the part of someone who investigates a human being's past with faulty clairvoyant methods. It is for this reason that the occult theories about the earlier lives of human beings are often completely wrong.

A famous case of preserved etheric and astral bodies going into other humans was when Zarathustra's astral body entered his great initiate, Hermes, and Zarathustra's etheric body entered his other great initiate, Moses. When, during [St. Matthew's account](#) of the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph leave with baby Jesus to [Egypt](#) immediately after birth, we now know it was because the Ego body of Zarathustra had reincarnated in the baby Jesus's body. His parents took the baby to Egypt where the other two bodies of the great initiate Zarathustra, his astral and etheric bodies, had exerted so much influence in conjunction with the Egos we know today as Hermes and Moses. To complete the development of the Jesus Ego who was to begin his instruction in the temple eleven years later, this trip to Egypt was essential.

In relating the life of Moses, the story of his unusual birth is always told, but it is rarely explained why the story is important. With what we have learned of the origin of Moses's etheric body from Zarathustra, we can now relate why the infant Moses was placed in a basket woven of bulrushes and floated on water alone for a long time before he was found - the purpose was to awaken completely the Zarathustran etheric body of Moses. (from page 9) Rightly understood, this event was the genesis of Genesis.

[page 150] During the time when Moses lay isolated in the ark on the water, the etheric body that had been woven into him became illuminated. Only then could the astral body and the ego begin to work in him. Are not the powerful images of Genesis, which will occupy humanity for a long time to come, images taken from the Akasha Chronicle? [RJM: Akasha Chronicle is the name for the record of all physical and spiritual events, like an oscilloscope log that encompasses both worlds.]

Steiner tells us that whenever a pioneering personality dies, the etheric body is always preserved, but he cautions one against the hubris of imagining oneself to be the reincarnation of a famous person as Socrates, Beethoven, or Napoleon, when in fact one may only carry an imprint of his etheric body. One need only consider the classic mental hospital cases claiming to be Napoleon to grasp the truth of the next passage.

[page 11] Not only is this an error that is regrettable in itself, but the human being coming to these conclusions would live under the influence of this mistaken idea, and that would have nearly catastrophic consequences. The result of such an illusion would be that the whole development of the soul proceeds in the wrong direction.

There are beings that descend into human bodies who do need a corporeal body, but do it anyway from time to time to assist the development of human beings. These beings, such as [Seth](#), the being who would inhabit Jane Roberts' body from time to time, can be found out by tracing back to a previous existence and not finding one. In Seth's case, he readily admitted to never being in a physical body previously. Seth is what in the East is called an *avatar*.

[page 14] . . . such a being gains nothing from this embodiment for himself and experiences nothing that is of significance for the world. This, then, is the distinction between a leading being that has emanated from human evolution and beings whom we call avatars. The latter reap no benefit for themselves from their physical embodiments, or even from one embodiment to which they subject themselves; they enter a physical body for the blessing and progress of all human beings.

"Whoever heard of anything so foolish? Seth, an avatar? So what? Inane tripe by some beer-drinking cigarette-smoker with an overactive imagination. What on Earth meaning could that have for me?" you may be thinking. Maybe none. Read on.

[page 14, 15] The greatest avatar being who has lived on earth, as you can gather from the spirit of our lectures here, is the Christ - the Being whom we designated as the Christ, and who took possession of the body of Jesus of Nazareth when he was thirty years of age. This Being, who did not come into contact with our earth until the beginning of our era, was incarnated for three years in a body of flesh and has since that time been in contact with the astral, i. e., the spiritual sphere of our supersensible world; this Being has a unique significance as an avatar being. Although other, lower avatar beings can reincarnate several times, it would be in vain for us to seek the Christ-Being in an earlier human embodiment on earth.

The essential difference between human beings and avatar beings is that we humans give the world nothing, we only take something from it - whereas avatars only give something and take nothing from the world. That describes the life of Christ Jesus aptly - He gave everything He had to the world and took nothing from it. Even His astral presence in the spiritual world, His most essential Being, He left behind for our benefit.

If we are going to acquire an automobile that will last us a long time, we don't purchase the cheapest one available, but the most expensive and durable one available to us. If we know that we are going to require an automobile for a long time, we are engaging in a valuable process of perception I call "remembering the future". I wrote a short verse about this process:

Remembering the Past

won't last
but,

Remembering the Future

will suit you.

If we look at large tribes of people, we can find no larger tribe than that of the Semites, which people derived their very name from their original father, Shem. Remembering the future meant knowing that Shem was to become the progenitor of a great tribe of people and preparing a special etheric body for him to structure his individuality around. This is something that all of us do. As soon as we are born, we begin structuring our individuality around our etheric body.

[page 16] A special etheric body must somehow be prepared for the ancestor of a tribe because it has to be, as it were, the prototype of an etheric body for all the descendants in succeeding generations. . . . Because of blood relationship in successive generations, the etheric bodies of all descendants of the tribe are in a certain sense copies of the ancestor's etheric body. Thus, every Semitic person's ether body had something like a copy of Shem's etheric body woven into it.

The original etheric body was woven into Shem's body by an avatar, a being who could remember the future and provide a blessing for the descendants of Shem. Once woven into Shem, multiple copies could be made of the etheric body in each of his blood descendants. History is much more than the physical facts of who did what to whom and when, and our perception of the truth of the multiplication of etheric bodies and the effects this process has on blood descendants is an illumination of a truth that may easily be glossed over by a mere recitation of facts.

[page 18] This is how finely interwoven the facts behind the physical world are, facts that are needed to elucidate to us what happens in the physical world. Only by being able to point to such facts of a spiritual nature that are behind the facts of the physical world do we learn to interpret history. History can never become comprehensible through considering physical facts alone.

So, dear Reader, you may be thinking of asking me this question, "Are you telling me that only the blood relatives of the early Christians can have an etheric body like Jesus Christ had?" Well, you would be right in thinking that copies of the original etheric or astral bodies were usually transmitted this way, through the blood that flowed from ancestor to descendant. It happened that way all through the evolution of the Earth up until the great avatar Christ came to Earth and entered the body of a man, Jesus of Nazareth for three years. When Jesus's blood flowed down from the cross on Golgotha, a great event, a one-time trick, a great mystery occurred in the history of the Earth - the multiple astral and etheric bodies of the great avatar became available to all the inhabitants of the Earth, and every human being became, in effect, a blood descendant of Christ Jesus from then on, for all of Earth's time to come, "till stars shall rise and set no more."

[page 19] The etheric and astral bodies of Jesus of Nazareth were multiplied and the copies preserved until they could be used in the course of human evolution. However, they were not bound up with this or that nationality or tribe. But when in the course of time a human being appeared who, irrespective of nationality, was mature and suitable enough to have his own etheric or astral body interwoven with a copy of the etheric or astral body of Jesus of Nazareth, then those bodies could be woven into that particular person's being. Thus we see how it became possible in the course of time for all kinds of people to have copies of the astral or etheric body of Jesus of Nazareth woven into their souls. The intimate history of Christian development is connected with this fact.

On pages 20 to 31 Steiner details the progress of Christianity through the physical, etheric, astral, and Ego realms. In the early centuries after Jesus Christ walked the Earth, the dissemination of Christianity was bound up with physical impressions of Jesus: personal memories, personal contacts, places He sat, etc. The need to link people back, one by one, till one arrived at Peter, a companion of Jesus, was deeply felt. By the time of St. Augustine, the need for physical memories faded and a feeling welled up as a direct

knowledge of the existence of Christ. Helping this process of direct knowing was the etheric bodies of Christ that were extant in large numbers of people. Proceeding from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries many copies of Jesus's astral body had interwoven with important figures of Christianity, such as Francis of Assisi. Even though humans of Assisi's time had Egos capable of forming lots of false ideas about things, the pervasive presence of the astral bodies of Jesus of Nazareth interwoven into the fabric of society left no doubt whatsoever about the existence of Jesus and His holy truths.

Once again, dear Reader, a minor digression is required to lubricate the way of progress through the rest of the review. The astral body contains three forms of understanding: sensory-based, thinking-based, and individuality-based. These forms are called by Steiner, *sentient soul*, *intellectual soul*, and *consciousness soul*. Francis of Assisi was a deep feeler, he loved to commune directly with nature, all of which stems from the profound sentient soul he received in the interweaving of the astral body of Jesus of Nazareth into his astral body. St. Francis never once tried to form logical arguments to persuade others of the correctness of Christianity or the truths of Jesus the Christ. There were others who had received an *intellectual soul* with their copy of the astral body of Jesus, and these led humankind into "proving with subtle and clearly developed concepts all that their literature contained as mystery truths." These scholars formed the science of *scholasticism*, "a little understood and much maligned science." (page24, 25) Rightly understood, the scholastics created the logical techniques for thinking that plowed the ground in which the bounteous tree of our modern day sciences first took root.

[page 25] One may think of the content of scholasticism as one wishes, but for several centuries this school of thought developed the capacity of human reflection and thus put its imprint on the culture of the time. Scholasticism accomplished this by an extremely subtle discernment between and outlining of various concepts. As a result, between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries the school implanted into humanity the capacity to think with acute and penetrating logic.

When the *consciousness soul* arrived on the scene, it was in the personages of such medieval mystics as Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler, in whom arose "the special conviction that Christ can be found in the human ego." With this understanding of how the three forms of astral body of Jesus of Nazareth may be woven into the astral body of human beings, one can decipher the otherwise recondite and confusing patterns of development of Christianity. Here is Steiner's summary of this pattern we have just waded through:

[page 26] We have seen how humanity in the course of its evolution was otherwise dependent on having incorporated within it these copies of the Jesus of Nazareth Being. In the early centuries people had existed who depended entirely on the physical plane; then in the following centuries there were human beings who were susceptible to having the etheric body of Jesus of Nazareth woven into their own etheric bodies. Later, human beings, one might say, became more oriented toward the astral body, and that is how the copy of the astral body of Jesus of Nazareth could now be incorporated into them. The astral body is the bearer of judgment, and it was the human capacity to judge that was awakened between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.

There is a wonderful idea that I believe I first encountered in Steiner. It goes like this: one can only discuss something if one has no knowledge of the subject. When one knows a subject, one has no desire or requirement to discuss the subject. There was a time during the early centuries of Christianity that everyone knew without a doubt that Holy Communion contained the body and blood of Christ. Christ said, "This is My body and this is My blood." Steiner tells us that, "Christ meant with these words that He would be united with the earth and become its planetary spirit." When the intellectual soul, the judgment soul, welled up in humans in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, they began to discuss the reality of the meaning of Christ's words. A devolution had taken place - humans were no longer able to have direct knowledge of the meaning of Holy Communion, of the Lord's Supper.

[page 27] Here we see verified a great historical law that should be of special significance to the spiritual scientist: As long as people know what the Lord's Supper was, they did not discuss it. They began to discuss it only after they had lost direct knowledge of it. . . When knowledge exists, knowledge is narrated, and there is no particular desire for discussion. Where people feel like discussing something, they have, as a rule, no knowledge of the truth. Discussion begins only when there is a lack of knowledge, and it is always and everywhere the sign of decline regarding the seriousness of a subject matter when discussions about it are to be heard. Discussions portend the decline of a particular trend. It is very important that time and again in Spiritual Science we learn to understand that the wish to discuss something should actually be construed as a sign of ignorance. On the other hand, we should cultivate the opposite of discussion, and that is the will to learn and the will to gradually comprehend what is in question.

Every [verb](#) has a process and a content aspect. This dual nature of words as containing content and process is important. This distinction becomes obvious when one does computer programming. The program sitting within the memory of a computer looks exactly like data and does nothing. Not until the computer transfers control to the first instruction of the program does the code begin to cycle through the CPU and actually perform a process of data moving, manipulation, and control. The program code is content and the executing code is involved in a process. Two distinct and important aspects of what one might otherwise think of as one thing: a program. Steiner understood this distinction and how to make use of it to help us understand the importance of the otherwise abstruse science of scholasticism.

[page 27, 28] Take scholasticism. What has become of it when we look not at its content, but perceive it as a means of cultivating and disciplining our mental faculties? [RJM: i. e., perceive its *process*.] Do you want to know? Scholasticism has become modern natural science! The latter is inconceivable without the reality of medieval Christian Science.

Now let us take a look at some of the most vociferous critics of Christianity and we may understand this otherwise most paradoxical thought - they got their ability to reason and think in that way from the Christian Science or scholasticism of the Middle Ages.

[page 28] Everything used today to combat Christianity so radically has been taken over from the Christian world of learning in the Middle Ages. Actually, today there cannot be an opponent of Christianity of whom it could not easily be shown that he would be unable to think as he does had he not learned his thought forms from the Christian Science of the Middle Ages.

Every period of time has a different method of understanding and perceiving evolution. A time will come when the reductionist approach of Darwin's evolution will be described as "quaint." On the threshold of the third millennium after the birth of Jesus of Nazareth who became the Christ and walked the Earth, died and poured His blood into the Earth, we are able to view evolution in a new perspective by virtue of the two thousand years of evolution that have preceded us. We are able to "find the whole process of our world evolution illuminated and pervaded by the Christ Being."

[page 29] That is to say, we would describe how the physical body of human beings originated on Old Saturn, how the etheric body made its appearance on Old Sun, the astral body on Old Moon, and the ego on the Earth.

We have become Egos that can even deny its own existence, but by receiving the true Christ being in ourselves, we can rise "to ever higher stages of existence." Only after the physical, etheric, and astral bodies arose could the Ego come into existence. The chore for us today is to develop in ourselves the spirit self (*manas*), life spirit (*buddhi*), and spirit man (*atma*). If we stay the course, we will develop in the following way:

[page 31] The transformed astral body will appear as the Christian spirit self, the transformed etheric body as the Christian life spirit. And in a radiant perspective of the future of Christianity, spirit man shines forth before our souls as the star toward which we strive, illuminated and glowing throughout with the spirit of Christianity.

Jane Roberts wrote this next passage on page 1 of her Seth book, [*Unknown Reality, Part I*](#).

*Today is tomorrow, and present, past,
Nothing exists and everything will last.*

From this I get the idea that it is I who change while the world around me stays the same. Since other humans change also, I benefit from their changes and I change also. I don't have to wait, I only have to evolve. Time is but my individual progress in comprehending the infinite divine cosmos. Nowhere is that more important than in my coming to perceive the reality of Christ, an endeavor that Rudolf Steiner has provided me great assistance in achieving.

[page 53] Only human beings who prepare themselves gradually for a full understanding of the Christ and who understand through their knowledge of the spiritual worlds what the Christ really is, as He surfaces time and again in ever changing forms during the course of human evolution - only those human beings will also gradually gain the maturity necessary to experience Christ in themselves. They will be ready to absorb, so to speak, the waiting replicas of the Christ-Ego, ready to absorb the ego that the Christ imprinted in the body of Jesus.

Steiner offers no theories and no discussions, only facts. When you take your VCR for repair, you want results, not theories and discussions over what is wrong with it. Tell me what needs replacement and replace it is our attitude. We don't want the technician to bend our ear with theories of electronic circuitry. We want to see the results of the theories in a working VCR when the repair is done. Likewise, when we study Steiner's books and lectures, we are not interested in theories or discussions, but facts. Facts that will prepare us to encounter the actual reality of the material and spiritual world.

[page 55] We are also concerned that human beings receive what is waiting in the spiritual world and what they have the power to receive, provided they prepare themselves for this task in the right way.

Earlier in this review I used a curious word *devolution* which is the reverse process of evolution, a descent instead of an ascent. How is it possible that we can undergo devolution in the process of evolution? Apparently there are times we must take a step backward in evolution before we may progress forward again. We lost our ability to perceive the spiritual worlds directly with our feelings and had to develop ways of creating logical judgments to understand the spiritual worlds with our intellect. We took a giant step backward in the our Fall from the spiritual world and made a giant step forward when Christ shed His blood for us in the Mystery of Golgotha. With our powerful Ego we can fall into all kinds of error, but the Ego of Christ is ever available to help us extract ourselves from error.

[page 62] The power of Christ will make human beings more perfect, spiritualize them, and lead them back into the spiritual world. Mankind developed its reason at the expense of clairvoyance; the power of Christ will enable human beings to learn on this earth and to ascend again with what they will have acquired on earth. Human beings descended from the Father, and the power of Christ will lead them back to the Father.

Previously an initiate who wished to be led to the Christ spirit had to undergo a three and a half day test which involved being placed in a state of apparent death. This was the experience of Lazarus, the great initiate and beloved disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, who later wrote the Gospel of John and Book of Revelations in the Bible. Christ Jesus was the teacher, the hierophant, that brought Lazarus out of his death-like trance after three and one half days. The Gospels are quite clear on the point that Christ Jesus

was not concerned about Lazarus's welfare when told that Lazarus had died. "He is asleep," was His response. But for the Mystery of Golgotha, each of us would have to endure such a rigorous process in order to perceive the spiritual essence of Christ. In our redemption, Christ has made this test unnecessary for us by undergoing the process Himself at a deeper level in the Mystery of Golgotha.

[page 65] The Christ has liberated us from this three and a half day test, and it is through Him that the exercises mentioned above have become possible without intercession by the hierophant. We see the first example of this in Saul when he became Paul. What happened to him on his way to Damascus must be interpreted as something similar to an initiation.

St. Paul first perceived the Christ Being directly shortly after the Mystery of Golgotha and proclaimed the good news that Jesus of Nazareth who had been crucified was the Christ Being whose progress towards Earth had been perceived and proclaimed as far back as the original Zarathustra in the ancient [Persian epoch](#). He was followed later by St. Augustine in whom the etheric body of Christ began to work and allowed him to become our "best interpreter of Paul's letters." (page 67) Next we find the astral body of Christ woven into Thomas Aquinas due to a fortuitous circumstance.

[page 68] When Thomas was a child, lightning struck nearby and killed his little sister. This seemingly purely physical event made him suitable to receive into his own astral body that of Christ.

Thomas Aquinas came to Earth during a time when the human reasoning power began to flourish due to influx from the powerful influence of Arabism, "a truly intellectual science." With Aquinas, "human thought rises to new heights." But there is one more great mind to be discussed and Steiner naturally leaves that person out, and that one is Rudolf Steiner himself. He was to contain in one person the clairvoyance of Paul, the direct feeling sense of Augustine, the reasoning power of Aquinas, and the Ego of Steiner to create a spiritual science suited for the modern world of the 20th Century when the etheric body of Christ is blooming on the Earth exactly two thousands years after the Mystery of Golgotha. Here is his own words he tells us what he was doing:

[page 69] Today I have tried to show you how the liberation of the intellect was the first stage of Christianity. This is only one leaf, but others will grow on the mighty plant of Christianity, one after the other. The blossom will be the total beauty of the earth, renewed through Christianity, and the fruit will be the new world for which today's earth is the preparation.

As Christ taught, is still teaching, and will be teaching to the end, He can be found by those who seek Him.

What can each of us do in our lives to further the blossoming of this flower we call Earth that will one day bring forth a new world, the fruit of humankind in the spiritual world?

[page 78, 79] Look into life and you will find out there our leaders of civilization, the pillars of external culture, active as inventors and discoverers, as scholars and natural scientists. . . . when the spiritual life touches your hearts with such force that you can compare yourselves with dignity to those who were gathered around the Great Initiate of the Sun Oracle, then you will be bearers of spiritual life in later ages. . . . If you feel your mission from a sense of history, then your hearts will become strong enough to withstand all the ridicule and disdain that the so-called pillars of civilization heap on Spiritual Science from the outside. . . . This will make you stand fast when those who govern the world with their erudition talk with disdain and contempt about the little spiritual scientific associations where those people sit who "do not want to go along with contemporary culture." Oh, yes they do want to go along, and they also know to

appreciate the accomplishments of the external, physical world, but they also know that just as a body cannot be without a soul, no external culture can exist without spiritual life.

If you, dear Reader, can relate to the above passage, you will certainly identify with the next question and its subsequent answer by Steiner:

[page 80] Why do people who have heretofore been nourished by the positive, orthodox religions, come to Spiritual Science as if responding to an undefined longing in their consciousness? Why do they listen to the anthroposophical message when before they listened only to the Vatican? Why? . . . What do the people coming to us need from us? They want us to tell them who Christ was and what He accomplished! They are coming to us because those who consider themselves to be the privileged bearers of the Christ-name today cannot tell them who Christ was, whereas anthroposophy can.

Steiner was dedicating the Francis of Assisi branch of the Anthroposophical Society in Malsch in 1909 when he said the above words. In the passage below he issues a powerful suggestion for us to love all creatures or to endure suffering by sharing the world with those we don't.

[page 86] Let us learn to love all people, lest our interpretation of the world be that to be united with what one does not love means suffering. Rather, let us learn to love every creature in its own right, and when our spiritual wells start to flow, our desires will be purified in such a way that we can partake in everything our souls are destined to receive, once the hurdle of the physical world are eliminated. And those spiritual fountainheads can begin to flow through the Christ-Impulse. People who will be content to obtain through the Christ-Spirit what they want will have their desires purified.

Few sounds are so powerful as the ringing of bells on Easter day. In Lecture VII which took place on or about Easter day, Steiner explains how Goethe used the sound of Easter bells to "conquer the thought and the impulse of death in Faust's heart." From the sounds of the Easter bells he moves to two other emblems, this time emblems of fire.

[page 92, 93] For today's humanity, two closely related truths shine as mighty lights and emblems on the horizon of the spirit — important points of reference for a developing humanity that is striving within the spiritual realm. The first emblem is the burning bramblebush of Moses, and the second is the fire appearing under lightning and thunder at Sinai from which Moses received the pronouncement of the "I am the I am." Who is that spiritual being in the two apparitions announcing himself to Moses? . . . No godhead other than the Christ is intended to be introduced by the words "I am the I am" . . . He announces Himself in the fiery element of nature, the element in which Christ is living."

As a student of the brain, computer design, and the evolution of consciousness, I am well aware of the plethora of theories that the mind is simply rotating circuits in our brain and that consciousness is but a byproduct of those rotating circuits. Some even go so far as to proclaim that when computers become sophisticated enough, they will have original thoughts of their own to amaze and enlighten us. I wrote a small poem where I expressed the idea that I'm not surprised that computers are writing poems, but I would most surprised if a computer program could select a good poem! Steiner tells us that thinking is akin to lightning and thunder.

[page 94] Not a single thought would flare up in our souls if ego and astral body did not work in concert, thus giving rise to a commensurate, interdependent functioning of the blood and of the nervous system. The future science of human beings will some day be amazed at today's scientific theory, which holds that thoughts originate solely in the nervous system. This belief is incorrect because the process responsible for the origination of thoughts must be seen as a dynamic interaction between blood and

nervous system. . . . And just as lightning in its counterplay with the elements produces thunder, so the counterplay of blood and nerves produces the thought that flashes up in the soul.

One who studies Rudolf Steiner a little soon notices that he never attempts to proselytize anyone to his spiritual science, but merely tells them about it. In this next passage he reveals the truth behind his approach - spiritual science can only be approached volitionally, by free choice. There will never be any Spiritual Science missionaries rowing canoes through the jungles of the Amazon or riding bikes through the jungles of suburbia in America.

[page 121, 122] This is so because today it is no longer possible to instill in human beings what is to inspire them from the inside without their having a hand in the process. Today people who feel that Spiritual Science speaks to their hearts must approach it through their own free will, through their own free impulse, and through the fact that they feel enlivened by spiritual knowledge. Hence we need not attempt to stir up an interest in Spiritual Science.

Not only does Steiner not proselytize, but he does not preach. If he does neither, what exactly does he say that he is doing?

[page 141] It is not our task to preach ideals but rather to provide human souls with the fuel that can generate spiritual wisdom, genuine brotherliness, and true humanity. To realize this is our goal.

One cannot help but place Rudolf Steiner in the category of a pillar of civilization along with Aristotle, Jesus of Nazareth, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. Certainly when Steiner spoke, lightning flashed and the thunder rolled overhead. If we listen carefully, we can hear it today.

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