The Occult Movement in the Nineteenth Century

LECTURE FIVE

It is very difficult indeed to speak about the so-called “Eighth Sphere” which was referred to openly for the first time by Mr. Sinnett — one cannot say that he gave “information” about it for what he said was a fallacy. [note 1] You can certainly realise why it is difficult to speak about this subject, for again it must be emphasised that our language has been coined for the outer, material world, and the Eighth Sphere was regarded as a secret matter until it was mentioned by Sinnett.

Consequently there are not many words that can be used for characterising the Eighth Sphere. The fact that all mention was avoided for so long will also enable you to realise what is involved when one speaks of it. You will therefore have to take the aphoristic remarks I shall make today as a kind of introductory exposition, given with the object of throwing out certain indications which, to begin with, can be only a small contribution to the subject. It is to be hoped, however, that there will be opportunities for saying more at some later time. On the basis of what was said in the last lecture and also, to some extent, on earlier occasions, I shall try to characterise what is called the “Eighth Sphere” in order that we may have a foundation for describing the development of the spiritual Movement in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth.

You will have realised from the lecture yesterday that the Eighth Sphere cannot be anything that belongs to the material world, for I have shown you that the greatest fallacy in Sinnett's statement is that the physical Moon is directly connected with the Eighth Sphere; and I tried to make it comprehensible that the actual foundation of the error consists in the fact that this pointed to something material and physical.

From this you will be able to conjecture, even if not fully to understand, that what is called the Eighth Sphere can have nothing directly to do with anything within the material world — that is to say, what can be perceived by man's senses and thought out on the basis of sensory perception has no part in the Eighth Sphere. So it will be useless to look for the Eighth Sphere anywhere in the material world.

You now have indications by means of which some approach can be made in thought to a conception of the Eighth Sphere. I have said that the Eighth Sphere has something to do with the residue left from the Old Moon and its evolution. So much you can gather from the studies we have pursued in the course of time. I tried to make it clear in the lecture yesterday that on the Old Moon, man's natural mode of perception was visionary and imaginative in character, so that any substantiality to be discerned in the Eighth Sphere must be found with this kind of vision. That is to say: it must be presumed at the outset that the Eighth Sphere is found by way of visionary Imaginations.

Diagram 5

How was it that the expression “Eighth Sphere” came to be used? — You know that human evolution takes its course through the seven spheres of Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus, Vulcan. We will conceive that besides these seven spheres there is still something else which lies outside them and yet is in some way related to the Earth. Here, then, we have a sphere, visible only to visionary-imaginative clairvoyance, which stands there as an Eighth Sphere over and above the seven which constitute the domain of the ordered and regular evolution of mankind. All such sketches are, of course, purely diagrammatic; one is obliged to draw separately spheres which can only be observed each within the others. For you will certainly have realised from our studies that as long as a man is within the material world, makes his observations through the senses and thinks with the intellect, he is standing in the Fourth Sphere, the Earth Sphere. If he develops his faculties of soul sufficiently to be able to see the Third Sphere, the Moon Sphere, then he takes a far flight—but not in the spatial sense. He observes, not from another place, but physically speaking, spatially speaking, from the same place. These seven spheres ought therefore in reality to be drawn within one another. They are successive stages and states of evolution and, fundamentally, such a diagram is of no other value than as if one were to say: human beings develop from birth to the seventh year in a first stage, from the seventh to the fourteenth year in a second stage, and so on. The being who has developed from the first to the seventh year cannot be thought of as separate from the being who is developing from the seventh until the fourteenth year. Neither is it correct to think of the seven successive spheres or stages of the Earth's evolution as separate from each other.

This will give you an inkling that the Eighth Sphere is to be observed within the Earth Sphere. It cannot properly be drawn either above or below; to depict the reality it would have to be sketched into the Earth Sphere. I have often given a crude example to express what is here meant. Just as the physical air is around us, so is the Spiritual around us; we have to look for the Spiritual within what is actually physical in our environment. Hence it must be presumed that just as the spiritual is round about us, so we must also look for the Eighth Sphere in our environment. This means that an organ enabling man to perceive the Eighth Sphere would have to be developed, just as his physical senses enable him to perceive the material Earth. He could then experience the Eighth Sphere quite consciously; but unconsciously he is always within it just as we are always within the air, even if we are not aware of it. And if we have developed an organ for experiencing the Eighth Sphere, we are conscious of it around us. So that if the Eighth Sphere is to be described, it must obviously be described as a realm in which we are living all the time.

Now, as I said, all that I can do in these introductory studies is to give some general information—the rest will emerge as we proceed. First of all, you can understand that what is around us as the Eighth Sphere is accessible to Imaginative-visionary clairvoyance. To develop Imaginative clairvoyance without perceiving something of the Eighth Sphere is impossible. The reason why it is so difficult to speak of matters such as the Eighth Sphere is because really clear and discriminative clairvoyance is possessed by so very few. In the Eighth Sphere we have to do with Imaginations, and what constitutes the essential nature of Earth-evolution — that is to say, the Fourth Sphere — is not present in the Eighth Sphere. The essential nature of the Fourth Sphere is constituted, as I indicated yesterday, by the mineral impregnation of this world-body. That we are able to live on the Earth is due to the fact that this Fourth Sphere has been mineralised: we live in a mineralised environment; what is perceived through the physical senses can be co-ordinated by the intellect. But we must conceive that the mineral element is totally absent from the Eighth Sphere.

When we eliminate the mineral element in thought, all that remains is a later stage of the Old Moon evolution, for whence could anything else originate ? But evolution proceeds; something that is perceptible through Imaginative, visionary clairvoyance but could be nothing else than a residue of the Old Moon—that would be no Eighth Sphere. All that could be said would be that something has been left behind by the Third Sphere.

In order to have some inkling of facts relating to the Eighth Sphere, let us keep the following in mind. In the course of its regular evolution, the Third Sphere became the Fourth Sphere; that is to say, a transition of the third elemental kingdom — for that is what we must call it — to the mineral kingdom took place. The mineral element was added. Otherwise we should have to conceive of the Old Moon as a sum-total of substantiality, imaginatively perceptible! It must therefore be assumed that the regular progression from the Old Moon to the Earth, from the Third Sphere to the Fourth Sphere, consists in what was formerly only imaginatively perceptible becoming materially perceptible, that is to say becoming mineralised. As the Eighth Sphere there remains, to begin with, the Old Moon element, but owing to a particular happening this Old Moon element undergoes a change. What took place in order that the Fourth Sphere might be able to arise from the Third is clearly described in the book Occult Science, where it is said that to the activities of the Spirits of Movement are added those of the Spirits of Form under whose guidance the whole process of the transformation takes place. [note 2] We can therefore say that the Fourth Sphere arises out of the Third through the fact that the Spirits of Form add their activities to those of the Spirits of Movement.

If the Spirits of Form had achieved everything that their own nature desires and moreover is able to achieve, when the mission of Sphere Three was fulfilled in the Cosmos, Sphere Four would have arisen quite naturally from Sphere Three. That is obvious. But we know that Luciferic and Ahrimanic spirits are at work — and they hold back for themselves something of the Old Moon substantiality, wrest it away, as it were, from the Spirits of Form. The fact that Lucifer and Ahriman do so is indicative of their essential nature. Thus as Sphere Three is advancing to a further stage, something is wrested from the Spirits of Form by Lucifer and Ahriman; into this part that is wrested away, Lucifer and Ahriman penetrate, instead of the Spirits of Form. The activities of Lucifer and Ahriman are added to those of the Spirits of Movement and, as a result, Eight arises out of Three. (Note by translator: The Eighth Sphere out of the Third Sphere.)

Something else, then, must be there, not merely the Old Moon, and this “something else” which comes into being as well as Sphere Four is constituted by the fact that mineral substantiality, as it comes into being, is wrested away at the moment of the birth of the Fourth Sphere. Thus when the mineral comes into existence out of the Imaginative substantiality, it is snatched by Lucifer and Ahriman and made into Imagination. Instead of an Earth arising from the remaining Old Moon substantiality, a cosmic body takes shape whose birth is due to the fact that the substantiality wrested from the Earth is made into what has come over from the Old Moon.

Now recall how I have described the conditions pertaining to the Old Moon, in the book Occult Science. In the Old Moon there was as yet nothing mineral. Had mineral substance been present, that world-body would have been an Earth, not Moon. Sphere Four comes into being through the birth of the mineral element. In that Lucifer and Ahriman approach, snatch mineral substantiality out of Sphere Four and infuse it into Sphere Three, the Old Moon is recapitulated, but now with materiality that belongs properly to the Earth.

Mark this well: instead of pure Imaginations being there, the Imaginations are densified by the infusion of a mineral element that has been wrested from the Earth. Densified Imaginations are thus created. We are therefore drawn into a world of densified Imaginations which are not lunar in character because they have been densified by materiality belonging to the Earth. They are ghosts, spectres — that is to say, behind our world there is a world of spectres created by Lucifer and Ahriman.

Let me express it schematically, as follows: On the Old Moon certain pictures were present. These should have passed over to the Earth as something everywhere perceptible. But Lucifer and Ahriman retained them for themselves. Lucifer and Ahriman wrested from the Earth certain of its constituents and made them into Imaginations, so that these Earth-substances became, not Earthly formations, but Moon formations. Into our Fourth Sphere, therefore, there has been instilled a sphere that is really a Moon-sphere, but is filled with Earthly substantiality and is therefore a bogus creation in the Universe. To the seven Spheres, an Eighth, created in opposition to the progressive Spirits, has been added. The necessary consequence of this is that the Spirits of Form must do battle on the Earth for every morsel of substantiality capable of mineralisation, lest it should be wrested from them by Lucifer and Ahriman and borne into the Eighth Sphere.

In truth, therefore, our Earth —the Fourth Sphere — is simply not what it appears outwardly to be. Were it really to consist of atoms, all these atoms would still be impregnated by formations belonging to the Eighth Sphere — which are perceptible only to visionary clairvoyance. These formations are present everywhere; so too is the spectre-like content of the Eighth Sphere which can therefore be perceived just as actual spectres are perceived. All earthly being and existence are involved here. Lucifer and Ahriman strive unceasingly to draw from the Earth's substances whatever they can snatch, in order to form their Eighth Sphere which then, when it is sufficiently advanced, will be detached from the Earth and go its own way in the Cosmos together with Lucifer and Ahriman. Needless to say, the Earth would then pass over to Jupiter as a mere torso. But man, as you realise, has his established place in the whole of Earth-evolution, for he is mineralised through and through. We are permeated by the mineralising process which is itself drawn into this battle, so that morsels of this substance can be continually wrested from it. Therefore we ourselves are involved in the battle. Lucifer and Ahriman battle against the Spirits of Form, with the aim of wresting mineral substance from us everywhere.

But the strength of the process varies in the different regions of our organism. We are diversely constituted; some of our organs are more perfect than others. The most perfect of all is our organ of thinking, the brain and the skull, and there the battle of which I have spoken is the most vehement, precisely because this human head, this human brain, is fashioned as it is; and it is so fashioned because at this place in our body, Lucifer, and Ahriman too, have been the most successful in wresting mineral substance from us. Physical substance there is more spiritualised than anywhere else. The formation of our skull is due to the fact that it is there that most has been wrested from us. Hence it is precisely through the head that we can emancipate ourselves from our organism to the greatest extent. We can soar upwards in thoughts, we can distinguish between the good and the evil. And for that very reason, Lucifer and Ahriman have there been the most successful in wresting away substantiality; in the so-called noblest organ of man they have been able to wrest away the greatest amount of mineralised substantiality. This alchemy by which mineral substance is sent over into the Eighth Sphere is taking place all the time behind the scenes of our existence. — To begin with, I am simply communicating information; corroborations will emerge more and more clearly as our studies proceed.

If everything were to run without a hitch for Lucifer and Ahriman, if they were everywhere able to wrest as much as they wrest from the organ of the head, Earth-evolution would soon reach a point where Lucifer and Ahriman could succeed in destroying our Earth and in leading over all evolution of worlds into the Eighth Sphere, so that Earth-evolution as a whole would take a different course. Hence Lucifer endeavours to unfold his greatest strength of all at the place where man is the most vulnerable, namely, in his head. The stronghold which it is easiest for Lucifer to capture is the human head; and everything that is similar to the head in respect of the distribution of the mineral element, so that it can be drawn out in the same way, is equally exposed to the danger of being despatched into the Eighth Sphere. No less a prospect looms as a consequence of this intention of Lucifer and Ahriman than that the whole evolution of humanity may be allowed to disappear into the Eighth Sphere, so that this evolution would take a different course.

Diagram 6

That, you see, was the intention of Lucifer and Ahriman from the beginning of Earth-evolution — to let the whole of this evolution disappear into the Eighth Sphere. It was therefore necessary that a counterweight should be created by those Spirits who belong to the Hierarchy of the Spirits of Form. The outer counterweight they created consists in this: into the “space”, as it were, of the Eighth Sphere something was inserted which works against this Eighth Sphere. To present this correctly, we must show the Earth here, and the Eighth Sphere here (see diagram). The Eighth Sphere belongs to our physical Earth in the sense indicated. We are surrounded everywhere by the Imaginations into which the aim is that mineral materiality shall continually be drawn. There lies the reason for the sacrifice made by Jahve or Jehovah — the precipitation of substance far denser than the other mineralised substance. This was established by Jahve as Moon, as the counteracting agent. It was substance of extreme density — and this density was described by Sinnett as substance of a far denser physical-mineral character than exists anywhere on the Earth. Hence Lucifer and Ahriman cannot dissolve it away into their world of Imaginations. And so this Moon circles around as a globe of dense matter, solid, dense, indestructible. If you read carefully enough you will find that even the descriptions of the Moon given by physicists tally with this. Everything that was available on the Earth was drawn out and placed there in order that there should be enough physical matter incapable of being wrested away. When we look at the Moon, we see there in the Universe a substance far more intensely mineralised, far physically denser, than exists anywhere on the Earth. Jahve or Jehovah, then, must be regarded as that Being who even in the physical domain has ensured that not all materiality can be drawn away by Lucifer and Ahriman. And then, at the right time, equal care will be taken by the same Spirit that the Moon shall re-enter the Earth when the Earth is strong enough to receive it, when the danger is averted by the development that has meanwhile taken place. [note 3]

This applies to the external, physical-mineral domain. But in the human domain too it was necessary that a counterweight should be created to the intention aimed at the human head. Just as in the outside world materiality had to be densified so that Lucifer and Ahriman cannot dissolve it by their alchemy, so in the human being something had to be set over against the organ that can most easily be attacked by Lucifer and Ahriman. Jahve had therefore to take care, just as he had done in respect of the mineral domain, that not everything can succumb to the attacks of Lucifer and Ahriman.

Care had to be taken that not everything in man proceeding from the head can become the prey of Lucifer and Ahriman; that not everything shall depend upon head-activity and the activity of the outward-turned senses, for then Lucifer and Ahriman would have been victors. It was necessary that a counterweight should be created in the domain of earthly life, that there should be in the human being something entirely independent of the head. And this was achieved through the work of the good Spirits of Form, who implanted the principle of Love into the principle of heredity on Earth. That is to say, there is now operative in the human race something that is independent of the head, that passes from generation to generation and has its deepest foundations in the physical nature of man.

Everything that is connected with propagation and with heredity, everything that is independent of man in the sense that he cannot penetrate it with his thinking, everything that is the gift of the Moon in the celestial firmament—that, in man, is what has proceeded from the principle of Love permeating the process of propagation and heredity. Hence the violent battle which persists through history, the battle waged by Lucifer and Ahriman against everything that comes from this domain. Lucifer and Ahriman want to force on man the exclusive sovereignty of the head, and they launch their attacks by way of the head against everything that is purely natural affinity. For whatever is hereditary substance on the Earth cannot be wrested away by them. What the Moon is in the heavens, heredity is in men on the Earth below. Everything that is grounded in heredity, everything that is not charged with thought, that is connected intrinsically with physical nature — that is the Jahve-principle. The Jahve-principle unfolds its greatest activity where nature is working as nature; it is there that Jahve has outpoured in greatest measure the Love that is his natural attribute, in order to create a counterweight to the lovelessness, the mere wisdom, of Lucifer and Ahriman.

It would be necessary to go very thoroughly into matters recently presented from quite different points of view, in order to show how in the Moon and in the process of human heredity, barricades have been created against Lucifer and Ahriman by the Spirits of Form. If you think more deeply about these matters, you will find that something of immense importance is contained in the indications given.

Now in order to reach at least some measure of understanding, the subject must also be approached from a rather different standpoint. If you remember what is said in the book Occult Science about the evolution of man through the Old Saturn, Old Sun and Old Moon stages, you will realise that in these stages there can be no question of freedom. In those other stages man is enclosed in a web of necessity. In order that he might be ripe for freedom, the mineral nature had to be incorporated into him; he had to become a being permeated with the mineral element. Hence man can be educated for freedom only within the earthly-material world.

This by itself indicates the tremendous significance of the earthly-material world. That which must be acquired by mankind — freedom of the will — can be acquired only during Earth-evolution. In the Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan stages men will need this freedom of will. Therefore when we consider the question of freedom, we are in a realm of great importance; for we know that the Earth is the begetter of freedom precisely because it is the Earth that impregnates man with the physical-mineral element.

From this you will understand that what stems from the free will must be kept within the realm of Earth. To Spheres Three, Two and One, it is impossible to apply anything that stems from the principle of freedom. But the endeavour of Lucifer and Ahriman is to drag the free will of man, and whatever stems from it, into the Eighth Sphere. This means that man is perpetually exposed to the danger of having his free will wrested from him and dragged by Lucifer and Ahriman into the Eighth Sphere.

This happens if the element of free will is transformed, for example, into visionary clairvoyance. When this is the case, a man is already in the Eighth Sphere. This is a matter of which occultists are so reluctant to speak, because it is an awful, terrible truth. The moment the free will is transformed into visionary clairvoyance, what unfolds in the human being becomes the booty of Lucifer and Ahriman. It is immediately captured by them and thereby spirited away from the Earth. You can see from this how, through the shackling of free will, the spectres of the Eighth Sphere are created. Lucifer and Ahriman are engaged perpetually in shackling man's free will and in conjuring all sorts of things before him in order to tear away what he makes out of these things and let it disappear in the Eighth Sphere.

When clairvoyance in all kinds of different forms develops in naive, credulous, superstitious people, it is often the case that their free will has been sacrificed. Then Lucifer instantly seizes hold of it, and whereas these people imagine they have had an experience of immortality, the truth is that in their visions they see a part, or a product, of their souls being wrested away and prepared for the Eighth Sphere.

You can imagine from this how deep was the concern of those who, having compromised by agreeing that by way of mediumship all kinds of truths relating to the spiritual world should be given to the public, then found the mediums believing that the dead were speaking to them. But the occultists then knew that what takes place between mediums and living men is that the stream of free will is passing into the Eighth Sphere. Instead of a link being formed with the Eternal, the mediums were testifying precisely to what was continually disappearing into the Eighth Sphere.

From this you will realise that Lucifer and Ahriman have an avid desire to bring as much as possible into the Eighth Sphere. Although Goethe mixed Lucifer and Ahriman together, he has nevertheless correctly described how a soul is wrested away from the clutches of Mephistopheles-Ahriman! It would be the richest prize for Lucifer and Ahriman if they could ever succeed in capturing a whole soul for themselves; for thereby such a soul would disappear into the Eighth Sphere and be lost from Earth-evolution. The greatest victory for Lucifer and Ahriman would be if one day they could claim that countless numbers of the dead had passed into their sphere. That would be their greatest victory. Moreover there is a way of achieving it. Lucifer and Ahriman may say: human beings long to know something about the life between death and a new birth. If, therefore, we tell them that they are learning something from the dead, they will be satisfied and will direct their feelings towards the realm from which announcements are made to them as coming from the dead. If therefore we desire that the hearts and minds of men shall be guided towards the Eighth Sphere, let us say to them: we are telling you something that comes from the dead. We shall capture men by alleging that the dead are in our domain.

This devilish plan — for here we have indeed to do with the devil — was put into effect by Lucifer and Ahriman when it had occurred to occultists to endeavour to accomplish something through mediumship. Lucifer and Ahriman inspired the mediums through whom they arranged the whole business, in order that people might be guided to the realm whence the dead were alleged to be speaking. Lucifer and Ahriman could then lay hold of their souls. The occultists were alarmed when they saw what course things were taking and they took counsel among themselves as to how to steer away from it. Even those who belonged to the left wing realised what was happening, and they said: we will do something different! An opportunity then presented itself through the appearance of a remarkable personality, namely H. P. Blavatsky. Now, after the plan had been seen through and the occultists on the Earth no longer lent their hands to it, Lucifer and Ahriman were obliged to pursue their aim in a different way.

Materialism had come upon the scene in the natural course of the Earth's evolution. Therefore in order to reckon with the mineralised process of evolution, it was necessary that men's attention should be focussed entirely on material things. That is materialism pure and simple! The occultists who had special aims of their own, said: Well and good, we will rely upon materialism. If, however, we take materialism in its purely earthly form, man will inevitably discover one day through his thinking that atoms do not exist — so that will not be very fertile soil. But human thinking can certainly be perverted if materialism is made occult. The best way of doing this is to present the Sphere that had to be created as a counterweight to the Eighth Sphere as the Eighth Sphere itself! If people can be led to believe that the materiality created as a counterweight to the Eighth Sphere is the Eighth Sphere itself, that will outstrip every conceivable earthly materialism! And earthly materialism was indeed outstripped in the assertion made by Sinnett. Materialism is there imported into the realm of occultism; occultism there becomes materialism. But sooner or later men would have been bound to discover this. H. P. Blavatsky, who had deep insight into this phase of the Earth's evolution, divined something of what was happening, after she had seen through the tricks of that strange individuality of whom I spoke in the last lecture, and she said to herself: This cannot go on as it is; it must be changed! But she said that under the influence of the Indian occultists who belonged to the left wing. She realised that things must change but that something not easily detectable must be created. In order to create something herself that would outstrip Sinnett's assertion, she acceded to the proposals of the Indian occultists who were inspiring her. These occultists, being adherents of the left path, had no other aim than the promotion of their own special interests — Indian interests. They had in mind to establish all over the Earth a system of wisdom from which Christ, and Jahve too, were excluded. Therefore something whereby Christ and Jahve were eliminated would have to be interpolated.

The following method was then adopted. It was said: Lucifer is in truth the great benefactor of mankind. (Of Ahriman there was no mention; so little was known of him that one name was used for both.) Lucifer brings to men everything they have gained through the head: science, art, in short, all progress. He is the true Spirit of Light; it is to him that men must adhere. And Jahve — what has he done, in reality ? He has established in men the principle of physical heredity! He is a Moon God who has introduced elements pertaining to the Moon. Hence the statement in The Secret Doctrine that men should not adhere to Jahve, for he is only the Lord of materiality, of all the lower, earthly impulses; the true benefactor of mankind is Lucifer. This shimmers through the whole of The Secret Doctrine, and is, moreover, clearly stated there. And so for occult reasons H. P. Blavatsky was prepared in such a way as to become a hater of Christ and Jahve. For in the occult domain such an utterance signifies exactly the same as Sinnett's statement that the Moon is the Eighth Sphere.

It is through knowledge alone that an approach can be made to these things — verily through knowledge alone. Therefore when we began the periodical Lucifer-Gnosis, the first article was necessarily on the subject of Lucifer, in order that he should be rightly understood, in order that it should be realised that inasmuch as he brings about head-activity, he is a benefactor of mankind. But the counterweight must also be there: Love must be there as the counterweight. This was stated in the very first article of the periodical, because at this point it was essential to intervene.

As you see, things were complicated. Fundamentally, what it was desired to achieve through H. P. Blavatsky was that men should be misled into believing in the Eighth Sphere. They could most easily be misled into this belief by something false being presented to them as the Eighth Sphere. Naturally, people were led to the spiritual world, for Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine has this great merit, that through it men's minds were directed to the spiritual world. But the path followed was in pursuance of special interests, not the interests of the evolution of humanity in general. All these things must be kept strictly in mind if we are to be quite clear as to which is the healthy path. We must not accept empty words without verification if we desire to hav e genuine occultism; we must resolve to see things clearly. Particularly at the present point of time in our development it has been necessary for me to give certain indications about these things, indications which can be supplemented at some other time by matters of even greater significance. I had to give these indications because, if you keep them rightly in your minds, you will see how our ship has been steered from the beginning of our Movement — steered in such a way that account has been taken of all the false paths that can be pursued and of all those things that were a menace to the spiritual development of humanity.

Indications of a path into the spiritual world must not be given blindly, above all not as the result of rapturous fanaticism. That is why the exhortation has again and again had to be made among you, my dear friends, that it is urgently necessary not to allow yourselves to be duped by what leads to the Eighth Sphere. And if again and again it has been said that more caution should be exercised in the domain of visionary clairvoyance, that validity should be ascribed only to that clairvoyance which, in leading into the higher worlds, excludes Lucifer and Ahriman — then it will be seen that everything capable of bringing the soul into connection with the Eighth Sphere must be rejected. If the tendency to shackle the free will and remain in the domain of visionary clairvoyance comes into evidence time and again, this is a sign that opposition is being put in the way of the clear-cut endeavour of our Movement, owing to the propensity to fetter the free will in visionary clairvoyance.

How happy some people would have been if only they could have shackled the free will! This was a symptom of how many of the traits prevailing in the other Movements spoken of here were being imported into our own Movement. It was not from Blavatsky, nor was it from outside, but by our Members themselves that breaches were constantly being made in what it is our aim to achieve. Such breaches were and are being made because announcements of visionary clairvoyants are greeted with rapturous wonder! This was an expression of perverse love for the Eighth Sphere. When one or another person has insisted: Dr. Steiner has said that such and such ought to be done, then this means that such and such a person wants to deliver up the free will to foreign influence, to let this will be determined, not by himself, but by someone else; he wants to make someone else responsible for instilling into the physical world a willingness to allow the free will to be fettered. Whenever people give way to fatalism instead of making decisions through their own power of judgment, they show their inclination to the Eighth Sphere. And everything that passes in this way into the Eighth Sphere disappears from Earth evolution, does not go forward in the right way with Earth evolution.

We have come to a point where it behoves us to pay heed to these things — that is why they have been brought forward. We have come to a point where we must pay attention to the needle in the scales which oscillates all the time between the exoteric and the esoteric. The principle in esotericism observed among us is that, fundamentally speaking, the occult life in its reality cannot be expressed by means of words. Things are said sometimes in an esoteric, sometimes in an exoteric form, and these are, as it were, two different dialects of one inexpressible language. And if in his arrogance a man wants to substitute the exoteric for the esoteric, he forgets that they are two dialects of an inexpressible language and that everything depends upon how he is able to hold the balance between the two. But what still remains between the two must be regarded as an inexpressible language—there is always something that cannot be directly expressed.

If, as in the book Occult Science, certain exoteric (sic) matters are publicised, care must be taken that in such a publication everything is put in such a way that it is within the grasp of the contemporary culture prevailing in the non-occult world outside. When it is said that something should remain esoteric, this simply means that it should remain within the circle of those who participate in everything that is presented in the sphere of esotericism. If things go wrong here, the esoteric is carried into the exoteric and then one is always facing a danger. This happens whenever anything that should be kept within a limited circle is carried out into the world so that there is no possibility of keeping up with it. ... During the years we have been pursuing our studies of Spiritual Science I have endeavoured to develop things in such a way that it can be clear to everyone who really goes into them that they are intelligible even before clairvoyance is attained. I have been at pains to make public nothing that cannot be comprehensible in its own domain. It follows therefore that only those who are willing to see human beings pass into the Eighth Sphere can have any valid objection to this spiritual-scientific Movement. When I made public the most delicate facts of all about the two Jesus children, opposition arose from a quarter which understood nothing at all and still places its faith in mediumship; whereas one who studies the Bible deeply enough today can grasp the circumstances which confirm the statement about the two Jesus children. We must therefore take our stand on the principle of following attentively what is brought forward, but not allowing it to be said that it is accepted among us out of belief in authority. Never should the phrase be heard that truths are accepted simply because I have voiced them! We should sin against the truth were we to say any such thing. One thing or another may be grounded on confidence; but that can never be made into a principle. Someone else may perhaps be better able to tread the path; but the rule to which every individual should adhere is this: not to accept things on authority, but to put them to the test.

It is by testing that confirmation will be found. Whenever the word “confidence” has been used among us it has been a danger signal; it has been a sign that we have entered a period when dangers threaten us. The attitude hitherto prevailing among us must cease, for Spiritual Science is grounded, not upon authority, but upon knowledge. The time for being easy-going about presenting Spiritual Science is over. Enemies will be on the look-out everywhere and we shall have much to combat; we shall have to make ourselves equal to the battle, and whenever confused minds feel compelled to throw themselves into the combat this will make it especially possible for the forces working against our spiritual-scientific Movement to develop.

These things must be regarded as resulting from the nature of the subject itself. We shall have to resolve to take account of all of them. For Movements with a particular bias find acceptance and adherents simply because there are always groups of human beings here and there whose interests are suited by one-sidedness. Humanity consists, does it not, of groups of human beings. If, now, an occultist attaches himself to a group, he finds it a means of support, he has a foothold from which he can start, because this group helps him. Therefore everyone who starts from a one-sided, biassed outlook may expect some measure of agreement and good-will. But he who starts from truth itself has, to begin with, all humanity against him. Truth has to conquer its domain with complete disinterestedness. That is why, at bottom, nothing is more hated than the truth, the unvarnished truth. And so there may be many adherents here and there who actually cherish hatred deep down within them. No wonder that this hatred sometimes cuts through the force that builds a wall against it — cuts through this force because the hatred has been accumulating for so long. Such hatred is far more widespread than is imagined and it is a factor that must be reckoned with. Wherever truth is trying to assert itself endeavours are made to transform and re-cast it in such a way that it can somehow serve the opposing Powers. And various endeavours cropping up among us at the present time must be regarded as an effort to distort truth as presented here and apply it in a different sense. The craftiest way of doing this is to declare: the teaching itself is good, the teacher—worthless. The teaching is stolen from the teacher and efforts are made to apply it to some other aims. — What Lucifer and Ahriman would love to do is to be able to take the wisdom of the Gods lock, stock and barrel and transfer it to the Eighth Sphere.

Endeavours such as those I have mentioned are directed to changing a Society in which freedom can prevail into a Society of slaves. That is the method which can serve Ahriman, for he sets out to make such activities useful to himself. — That is the more esoteric side of the matter, which we must now also consider with the necessary earnestness from the exoteric aspect—in the other dialect.

I would beg you not to lose sight of the fact that we are standing at a crucial point in the development of our Spiritual Science.

Notes:

1. See notes at end of this lecture.

2. See pp. 128-9 et seq in the 1962-3 edition.

3. See Lecture by Rudolf Steiner: “From the Departure of the Moon to the Return of the Moon,” given in Dornach, 13th May, 1921. Printed in The Golden Blade, 1960.

NOTES BY TRANSLATOR

As the literature which contains much direct confirmation of what is said by Dr. Steiner is not always readily available and may be unfamiliar to readers of these lectures, the following notes and quotations may be helpful.

(1) The very wide circulation of Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism is indicated by the fact that by the year 1884 (that is, only a year after publication) it was already in its third edition. There have been eight editions in all.

(2) The “Eighth Sphere”: In The Secret Doctrine, Volume I, page 186, Sinnett's statement that the Eighth Sphere is the Moon is criticised by Madame Blavatsky who says, however, that it is to be hoped that the “mistaken” notions of which this is one may be corrected in later editions of the book. She was obviously referring to the first edition, as was C. J. Harrison in his statement contained in The Transcendental Universe (see note below). In the third edition of Esoteric Buddhism, however, the corresponding passage is identical with that in the eighth edition, and while not specifically mentioning the Moon, implies it so specifically that nothing has really been done in the way of correction.

The passage in Esoteric Buddhism is as follows (Pages 104 and 105, third edition, also eighth edition, pages 117 and 118):

“Kama loca may be permanently inhabited by astral beings, by elementals, but can only be an antechamber to some other state for human beings. In the case imagined, the surviving personality is promptly drawn into the current of its future destinies, and these have nothing to do with this earth's atmosphere or with Devachan, but with that ‘Eighth Sphere’ of which occasional mention will be found in older occult writings. It will have been unintelligible to ordinary readers hitherto why it was called the ‘Eighth Sphere’ but since the explanation, now given out for the first time, of the sevenfold constitution of our planetary system, the meaning will be clear enough. ... It will readily be guessed that the only sphere connected with our planetary chain, which is lower than our own in the scale, having spirit at the top and matter at the bottom, must itself be no less visible to the eye and to optical instruments than the earth itself, and as the duties which this sphere has to perform in our planetary system are immediately associated with this earth, there is not much mystery left now in the riddle of the Eighth Sphere, nor as to the place in the sky where it may be sought. ...”

Most interesting references are to be found in C. J. Harrison's The Transcendental Universe (a book containing lectures given by him in the year 1893 before the “Berean Society” which was “an association of students of theoretical occultism”.) The following extracts are taken from pages 1o8, 109:

“... It will be my duty to explain, to the best of my ability, certain facts in connection with a mystery known as the Mystery of the Eighth Sphere. ... Now I am well aware that there are many occultists who say the subject ought not to be brought before the public at all, and object to the very name being mentioned, ... In reply to such persons it is due to myself to say I am breaking no oath, and violating no confidence. These lectures were advertised in the public journals, and all who choose to attend them are welcome. I regret to be obliged to differ from many persons, whom I hold in the highest respect, as to whether or not the times are ripe for mentioning these subjects. They have been mentioned — prudently or imprudently — and are familiar to all who have taken an interest in the Theosophical Movement ... The first person, however, to profane the mysteries (albeit unconsciously) was Mr. Sinnett, the author of Esoteric Buddhism, a book which made considerable sensation when it came out, but which contains nothing new that is true, and nothing true that is new. As he was the first to make public the information that there is an “eighth sphere” and a mystery connected with it of which he is ignorant, it may be as well to say that both these statements are true. But when he proceeds to say that the Eighth Sphere is the Moon, he gives utterance to one of those half-truths that are more misleading than falsehoods ...

Readers of Esoteric Buddhism will remember that man is said therein to evolve on seven planets; three of which (including the Earth) are visible, and the other four composed of matter too attenuated to be visible. Also that there is an eighth planet, the moon, in which matter “asserts itself” yet more strongly than on the earth. Anything more utterly misleading it is impossible to conceive. Madame Blavatsky, who knew very well that this kind of thing was sure to be exposed sooner or later, has in her Secret Doctrine corrected some of the errors, but as she has not chosen to elucidate any portion of the mystery except such as suit her purpose, and as she is destitute, moreover, of the literary gifts of her disciple, her teaching in respect to the Seven Planets and the Eighth Sphere will be “caviare to the General”, who will continue to regard Mr. Sinnett's explanation as the genuine “Esoteric Buddhism” ...”

(3) In Lecture II, Dr. Steiner refers to the ”occult imprisonment” to which H. P. Blavatsky was subjected. He also refers to this in Lecture V of the Course Things of the Present and Past in the Spirit of Man.

The following is quoted from Harrison's The Transcendental Universe, page 36:

“... What is occult ‘imprisonment’, and why was it inflicted on Madame Blavatsky?

There is a certain operation of ceremonial magic by means of which a wall of psychic influences may be built up around an individual who has become dangerous, which has the effect of paralysing the higher activities, and producing what is called the ‘repercussion of effort’, and the result is a kind of spiritual sleep characterised by fantastic visions. It is an operation seldom resorted to even by Brothers of the Left, and in the case of Madame Blavatsky was disapproved of by almost all European occultists. On the American brotherhoods alone rests the responsibility for what has since happened. ...”