

# Incarnation of Ahriman

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*In the (published) complete works (GA) there are only 5 lectures containing direct indications as to the nature of the Incarnation of Ahriman.*

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In addressing a public audience today on the most important question of our time, it makes a great difference if one speaks from a knowledge of the deeper forces of world-historical evolution, that is, from initiation-science, or if one speaks without such knowledge. It is relatively easy to speak about modern questions if one relies upon data of external knowledge which are considered scientific, practical, and so on. It is, however, extraordinarily difficult to speak about these questions from the standpoint of initiation-science — from which indeed everything is derived with which we have to deal at such gatherings as ours today. For he who speaks from that standpoint about problems of the time knows that he is opposed not only by the casual, subjective opinions of those to whom he speaks. He knows too that a great part of mankind today is already under the control, from one side or another, of Ahrimanic forces of a cosmic nature which are growing stronger and stronger. To explain what I mean by this, I must give you a kind of historical survey of a fairly long period of human history.

From various statements which have been made here and which you will also find in some of my lecture-courses, you know that we have to place the beginning of our modern age in the middle of the fifteenth century. We have always called this period — of which we are really only at the beginning — the Fifth Post-Atlantean epoch. It has replaced the Greco-Latin Epoch, which we reckon from the middle of the eighth century B.C. to the middle of the



fifteenth century; and further back still, we have the Egyptian-Chaldean epoch. I have merely indicated this so that you may remember where, in human evolution as a whole, we place the epoch in which we feel ourselves standing as modern men.

Now you know that at the close of the first third of the Greco-Latin Epoch, the Mystery of Golgotha took place. And from many different aspects we have characterized what really came about for human evolution through the Mystery of Golgotha, in fact for the whole evolution of the earth. Today, into this broad historical survey, we will place various things concerning mankind which are connected with this Mystery.

With this in view, let us glance back into far earlier times, let us say, into the ages about the beginning of the third millennium B.C. You are aware how little is said in external historical tradition about this early evolution of the human race on earth. You know, too, how external documents point over to Asia, to the Orient. From many anthroposophical sources, you will know that the further we go back in mankind's evolution, the more we find a different constitution of the human soul, and something like an ancient, original wisdom underlying the whole evolution of humanity. You know, further, that certain traditions of an ancient wisdom of mankind were preserved in close, secret circles, right into the nineteenth century. They have even been preserved into our own time — but not, for the most part, at all faithfully.

When a man of today learns to know something of this original wisdom, he is astounded at the depths of the realities to which it points. Yet in the course of the studies we have been pursuing for many years, it has been shown that this widespread wisdom-teaching of ancient times must always be contrasted with the understanding of life and the world that was possessed by the old Hebrew people and bore a completely different character. With a certain justice the widespread original wisdom is described as the heathen, pagan element, and to this is opposed the Hebrew, Jewish element. From external traditions and literature you are aware how the Christian element then arose out of the Jewish.

You can already gather from these external facts something that I beg you to bear in mind, namely, that it was essential in humanity's evolution to confront the ancient heathen element and its wisdom with the Jewish element out of which Christianity evolved partially, at all events. The primeval heathen or pagan wisdom in its totality was not destined to have the sole influence on the further evolution of mankind. And now the question must arise: Why had the ancient pagan wisdom, which is in many respects so wonderful, to experience a new form, a transformation, through Judaism and Christianity? This question inevitably arises.

The answer is supplied for Initiation-wisdom only through a very, very weighty fact, through an event which took place far over in Asia at the beginning of the third millennium of the pre-Christian era. Clairvoyant vision finds in looking back that an incarnation of a super-sensible Being in a human being had taken place there, just as in the Event of Golgotha an incarnation of the super-sensible Christ Being had taken place in the man Jesus of Nazareth.

The incarnation that took place at the beginning of the third millennium B.C. is extraordinarily difficult to follow up, even with the science of seership, of initiation. It gave humanity something of immense brilliance, having an incisive effect. What it gave to humanity, in fact, was the primeval wisdom.

Viewed externally, one can say that it was a wisdom penetrating deep into reality; cold, based purely on ideas, permeated little by feeling. The actual inner nature of this wisdom can be judged only by going back to that incarnation which took place over in Asia at the beginning of the third pre-Christian millennium. It is revealed to the retrospective clairvoyant gaze that this was an actual human incarnation of the Luciferic Power.

And this incarnation of Lucifer in humanity, which in a certain way has been achieved, was the origin of the widely extended ancient wisdom based on the Third Post-Atlantean civilization.

There was still an after-effect, even in Grecian times, of the widespread cultural impulse that was derived from this Asiatic, Luciferic human being. Luciferic wisdom was of the utmost benefit to man in that epoch of evolution — brilliant in a certain way, graduated according to the different peoples and races among which it was spread. It was plainly recognizable throughout the whole of Asia, then in the Egyptian civilization, the Babylonian civilization and even in the culture of Greece.

All that was possible to the humanity of that time in thought, in the realm of poetry, in deeds, was in a certain way determined through the entry of this Luciferic impulse into human civilization.

It would, of course, be extraordinarily philistine to wish to say: That was an incarnation of Lucifer, hence we must flee from it! Such philistinism could make one also flee from the beauty and greatness that has come to mankind from this Luciferic stream, for the fruits of Greek culture with all their beauty, proceeded, as already said, from this stream of evolution. The whole of Gnostic thought existing at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, an impressive wisdom shedding light deep into cosmic realities — this whole Gnostic knowledge was inspired by the impulse coming from Luciferic forces. One must not say that Gnostic thought is therefore false; one is merely characterizing it by saying that it is permeated by Luciferic forces.

Then, considerably more than two thousand years after the Luciferic incarnation, came the Mystery of Golgotha. It may be said that the men among whom the impulse of this Mystery spread were still fully imbued in their thinking and feeling with what had come from the impulse of Lucifer. And now there entered into the evolution of civilized humanity an entirely different impulse, the impulse proceeding from the Christ. We have often spoken of what this Christ Impulse signifies within civilized humanity. The Christ-Impulse — I will only touch on this today — was taken up by the hearts and minds that I have just

characterized. One might say that it shone into all the best that came to man from Lucifer. And in the first Christian centuries, men understood the Christ through what they had received from Lucifer. These things must be faced without prejudice; otherwise it is not really possible to understand the particular way in which the Christ Impulse was received in the first centuries of our era.

As the Luciferic impulse began to fade more and more, men were also increasingly unable to absorb the Christ Impulse in the right way. Consider how much has become materialistic in the course of modern times. But if you ask yourself what in particular has become materialistic, you must receive the answer: a great part of modern Christian theology. For it is simply the starkest materialism to which a great part of modern Christian theology succumbs when it no longer sees the Christ in the man Jesus of Nazareth. It sees only the human being, the 'simple man of Nazareth,' the man whom one can understand if one will only raise one's self a little to some sort of higher understanding. The more the man Jesus of Nazareth could be regarded as an ordinary human being, one belonging to the ranks of other noted human personalities, the better it pleased a certain materialistic trend of modern theology. Of the super-sensible element of the Event of Golgotha, modern theology is willing to recognize little, very little.

The impulses entering humanity from a Luciferic source sank down gradually into the soul. On the other hand, however, another impulse, which we call the Ahrimanic, is growing stronger and stronger in modern times. It will become increasingly strong in the near future and on into future ages. The Ahrimanic impulse proceeds from a super-sensible Being different from the Being of Christ or of Lucifer. Equally with 'super-sensible' one can say 'subsensible' — but that is not the point here. The influence of this Being becomes especially powerful in the Fifth Post-Atlantean Epoch. If we look at the confused conditions of recent years we shall find that men have been brought to such chaotic conditions mainly through the Ahrimanic powers.

Just as there was an incarnation of Lucifer at the beginning of the third pre-Christian millennium, as there was the Christ Incarnation at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, so there will be a Western incarnation of the Ahriman being some little time after our present earthly existence, in fact, in the third post-Christian millennium. To form a right conception of the historical evolution of mankind during approximately 6000 years, one must grasp that at the one pole stands a Luciferic incarnation, in the center, the incarnation of Christ, and at the other pole the Ahrimanic incarnation. Lucifer is the power that stirs up in man all fanatical, all falsely mystical forces, all that physiologically tends to bring the blood into disorder and so lift man above and outside himself. Ahriman is the power that makes man dry, prosaic, philistine — that ossifies him and brings him to the superstition of materialism. And the true nature and being of man is essentially the effort to hold the balance between the powers of Lucifer and Ahriman; the Christ Impulse helps present humanity to establish this equilibrium.

Thus these two poles — the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic — are continuously present in man. Viewed historically, we find that the Luciferic preponderated in certain currents of cultural development of the pre-Christian age and continued into the first centuries of our era. On the other hand the Ahrimanic influence has been at work since the middle of the fifteenth century and will increase in strength until an actual incarnation of Ahriman takes place among Western humanity.

Now it is characteristic of such things that they are prepared long in advance. Ahrimanic powers prepare the evolution of mankind in such a way that it can fall a prey to Ahriman when he appears in human form within Western civilization — hardly then to be called ‘civilization’ in our sense — as once Lucifer appeared in human form in China, as once Christ appeared in human form in Asia Minor. It is of no avail to give oneself illusions today about these things. Ahriman will appear in human form and the only question is, how he will find humanity prepared. Will his preparations have secured for him as followers the whole of mankind that today calls itself civilized, or will he find a humanity that can offer resistance. It does not help at all to give oneself up to illusions. People nowadays flee the truth, and one cannot give it to them in an unvarnished form because they would ridicule it and scoff and jeer. But if one gives it to them through the “Threefold Social Organism” as one now tries to do, then they will not have it either — not the majority, at any rate. The fact that people reject these things is just one of the means which the Ahrimanic powers can use and which will give Ahriman the greatest possible following when he appears in human form on earth. This disregard of the weightiest truths is precisely what will build Ahriman the best bridge to the success of his incarnation. And nothing will help us to find the right position in regard to the part played by Ahriman in human evolution except an unprejudiced study of the forces through which Ahriman’s influence works, as well as learning to know the forces through which mankind can arm itself against being tempted and led astray. For this reason we will cast a brief glance today at various things which would foster support of Ahriman and which Ahrimanic powers, working out of super-sensible worlds through human minds down here, will particularly employ in order to make his following as numerous as possible.

One of the means is this — that it is not realized what is the actual significance for man of certain kinds of thought and conception which predominate in modern times. You know, indeed, what a great difference there is between the way a man felt himself to be within the whole cosmos in the Egyptian age, let us say, and even in the time of Greece, and how he feels since the beginning of the modern age, since the close of the Middle Ages. Picture to yourselves a well-instructed ancient Egyptian. He knew that his body was constituted not merely of the ingredients which exist here on earth and are embodied in the animal kingdom, plant kingdom, mineral kingdom. He knew that the forces which he saw in the stars above, worked into his being as man; he felt himself a member of the whole cosmos. He felt the whole cosmos not only quick with life, but ensouled and imbued with spirit; in his consciousness there lived something of the spiritual beings of the cosmos, of the soul-nature of the cosmos and its life. All this has been lost in the course of later human history. Today

man gazes from his earth up to the star-world and to him it is filled with fixed stars, suns, planets, comets, and so on. But with what means does he examine all that looks down to him out of cosmic space? He examines it with mathematics, with the science of mechanics. What lies around the earth is robbed of spirit, robbed of soul, even of life. It is a great mechanism, in fact, only to be grasped by the aid of mathematical, mechanistic laws. With the help of these mathematical, mechanistic laws we grasp it magnificently! A student of spiritual science is undoubtedly just the one to value the achievements of a Galileo, a Kepler, and others, but what penetrates human understanding and consciousness through the tenets of these great spirits in human evolution merely shows the universe as a great mechanism.

What this means is only revealed to one who is able to grasp man in his *whole* nature. It is all very well for astronomers and astro-physicists to present the universe as a mechanism which can be understood and calculated by mathematical formulae. This indeed is what a man will believe in the time from waking in the morning till going to sleep again at night. But in those unconscious depths which he does not reach with his waking consciousness but which yet belong to his existence and in which he lives between going to sleep and waking, something quite different concerning the universe flows into his soul. There lives in the human soul a knowledge which, although unknown to the waking consciousness, is yet present in the depths and moulds the soul — a knowledge of the spirit, of the life of the soul, of the life of the cosmos. And although in his waking consciousness man knows nothing of what goes on there in communion with the spirit, soul and life of the universe while he sleeps — in the soul the things are there; they live within it. And much of the great discord felt by modern man is derived from the disharmony between what the soul experiences and what the waking consciousness acknowledges as its world-conception.

And what does the whole spirit and purport of anthroposophical spiritual science say about such things? It says: What the ideas of Galileo, Copernicus, have brought to mankind is grand and mighty, but not an absolute truth, by no means an absolute truth. It is one aspect of the universe, one side from a certain standpoint. It is only through the arrogance of modern man that people say today: “Ptolemaic world-system — childishness; that is what men had when they were still children. We have made such great strides — right ‘to the stars’ and *that* is what we now take as the absolute.” It is just as little an absolute as the Ptolemaic system was an absolute, it is *one* aspect. The only right view — according to spiritual science — is to realize that all that is accepted by way of mere world-mathematics, mere world-schematism of a mechanical order, does not furnish man with absolute truth about the universe, but with illusions. The illusions are necessary because mankind goes through varied forms of education in its different stages of evolution. For modern education we need these illusions of a mathematical nature about the universe, we must acquire them, but we must know that they are illusions. And most of all they are illusions when we transpose them into our daily environment, when, in accordance with the atomic or molecular theories, we even endeavour

to create a kind of astronomy for the substances of the earth. A right attitude in regard to the whole of modern science, insofar as it thinks along these lines, will recognize that its knowledge is illusion.

Now, in order that his incarnation may take the most profitable form, it is of the utmost interest to Ahriman that people should perfect themselves in all our illusory modern science, but without knowing that it is illusion. Ahriman has the greatest possible interest in instructing men in mathematics, but not in instructing them that mathematical-mechanistic concepts of the universe are merely illusions. He is intensely interested in bringing men chemistry, physics, biology and so on, as they are presented today in all their remarkable effects, but he is interested in making men believe that these are absolute truths, not that they are only points of view, like photographs from one side. If you photograph a tree from one side, it can be a correct photograph, yet it does not give a picture of the whole tree. If you photograph it from four sides, you can in any case get an idea of it. To conceal from mankind that in modern intellectual, rationalistic science with its supplement of a superstitious empiricism, one is dealing with a great illusion, a deception — that men should not recognize this is of the greatest possible interest to Ahriman. It would be a triumphant experience for him if the scientific superstition which grips all circles today and by which men even want to organize their social science, should prevail into the third millennium. He would have the greatest success if he could then come as a human being into Western civilization and find the scientific superstition.

But I ask you not to draw false conclusions from what I have just said. It would be a false conclusion to avoid the science of the day; that is the very falsest conclusion which could be drawn. We must get to know science; we should get an exact knowledge of all that comes from this direction — but with the full consciousness that we are receiving an illusory aspect, an illusion necessary for our education as men. We do not safeguard ourselves against Ahriman by avoiding modern science, but by learning to know its character. For modern science gives us an external illusion of the universe, and we need this illusion. Do not imagine that we do not need it. We must only fill it in from quite another side with actual reality gained through spiritual research, we must rise from the illusory character to the true reality. You will find reference in many of my lecture-courses to what I am telling you today, and you will see how everywhere it has been sought to enter fully into the science of our time, but to lift it all to the sphere where one can see its real value. You cannot wish to get rid of the rainbow because you know it to be an illusion of light and color! You will not understand it if you do not realize its illusory character. But it is just the same with all that modern science gives you for your imagination of the universe, it gives only illusions and that must be recognized. It is by educating oneself through these illusions that one arrives at the reality.

This, then, represents one of the means used by Ahriman to make his incarnation as effective as possible — this keeping of man back in scientific superstition.

The second means that he employs is to stir up all the emotions that split men up into small groups — groups that mutually attack one another. You need only look at all the conflicting parties that exist today, and if you are unprejudiced you will recognize that the explanation is not to be found merely in human nature. If men honestly try to explain this so-called World War through human dis-harmonies, they will realize that with what they find in physical humanity they cannot explain it. It is precisely here that “super-sensible” powers, Ahrimanic powers, have been at work.

These Ahrimanic powers are working, in fact, wherever dis-harmonies arise between groups of men. Now the question arises on what foundation is most of what we are considering based?

Let us proceed from a very characteristic example. — The modern proletariat has had its *Karl Marx*. Observe closely how the doctrines of Karl Marx have been spread among the proletariat, with Marxist literature reaching practically immeasurable proportions. You will find all the methods of our present-day science used in the books; everything is strictly proved, so strictly proved that many people, of whom one would never have supposed it, have fallen victim to Marxism. What was the actual destiny of Marxism? It spread at first, as you know, among the proletariat and was firmly rejected by university science. Today there are already a number of university scientists who have veered round to acknowledging Marxist logic. They adhere to it because its literature has proved that its conclusions are in excellent accord, that from the standpoint of modern science Marxism can be quite neatly proved. Middle-class circles have unfortunately had no Karl Marx who could have proved the opposite for them; for just as one can prove the ideological character of right, morality, and so forth, the theory of surplus value and materialistic historical research from the Marxist standpoint, so is it possible to prove their exact opposite. A middle-class, bourgeois-Marx would be fully able to prove the exact opposite by the same strict method. There is no sort of swindle or humbug about it; the proof would work out right.

Whence does this come? It comes from the fact that present human thinking, the present intellect, lies in a stratum of being where it does not reach down to realities. One can therefore prove something quite strictly, and also prove its opposite. It is possible today to prove spiritualism on the one hand and materialism on the other. And people may fight against each other from equally good standpoints because present-day intellectualism is in an upper layer of reality and does not go down into the depths of being. And it is the same with party opinions. A man who does not look deeper but simply lets himself be accepted into a certain party-circle — by reason of his education, heredity, circumstances of life and State — quite honestly believes — or so he thinks — in the possibility of proving the tenets of the party into which he has slipped, as he says. And then — then he fights against someone else who has slipped into another party! And the one is just as right as the other. This calls forth chaos and confusion over mankind that will gradually become greater and greater unless men see through it. Ahriman makes use of this confusion in order to prepare the triumph of his



incarnation and to drive men with increasing force into what they find so difficult to realize — namely, that by intellectual or modern scientific reasoning today, one can prove anything and equally well prove its opposite. The point is for us to recognize that everything can be proved and for that reason to examine the proofs put forward in science today. It is only in natural science that reality is shown by the facts; in no other field can one consider intellectual proofs valid. The only way to escape the danger that threatens if one accepts the lures of Ahriman and his desire to drive men deeper and deeper into these things, is to realize through anthroposophical spiritual science that human knowledge must be sought for in a stratum deeper than that in which the validity of our proofs arises. And so, in order to create dissensions, Ahriman also makes use of what develops from the old conditions of heredity which man has really outgrown in the Fifth Post-Atlantean Epoch. The Ahrimanic powers use all that is derived from old circumstances of heredity in order to set men against each other in conflicting groups. All that comes from old differences of family, race, tribe, peoples, is used by Ahriman to create confusion. “Freedom for every nation, even the smallest ...” These were fine-sounding words. But the powers hostile to man always use fine words in order to bring confusion and in order to attain the things that Ahriman wishes to attain for his incarnation.

If we inquire: Who stirs up nations against each other? Who raises the questions that are directing humanity today? — the answer is: the Ahrimanic deception which plays into human life. And in this field men very easily let themselves be deceived. They are not willing to descend to the lower strata where reality is to be found. For, you see, Ahriman skillfully prepares his goal beforehand; ever since the Reformation and the Renaissance, the economist has been emerging in modern civilization as the representative governing type. That is an actual historical fact. If you go back to ancient times, even to those that I have characterized today as the Luciferic — who were the governing types then? *Initiates*. The Egyptian Pharaohs, the Babylonian rulers, the Asiatic rulers — they were initiates. Then the priest-type emerged as ruler and the priest-type was really the ruler right up to the Reformation and the Renaissance. Since that time the economist has been in command. Rulers are in fact merely the handymen, the understrappers of the economists. One must not imagine that the rulers of modern times are anything but the understrappers of the economists. And all that has resulted by way of law and justice — one should only study it carefully — is simply a consequence of what economically oriented men have thought. In the nineteenth century the “economical” man is replaced for the first time by the man thinking in terms of banking, and in the nineteenth century there is created for the first time the organization of finance which swamps every other relationship. One must only be able to look into these things and follow them up empirically and practically.

All that I stated in the second public lecture here (*The Social Future*, October 25, 1919) is profoundly true. One could only wish that it were followed up in all details; it would then be seen how fundamentally true these things are. But just because this rulership of the mere ‘symbol for solid goods’ (that is to say, money — quotation from the lecture) has arisen,

Ahriman has been given another essential medium for the deception of mankind. If men do not realize that the rights-state and the organism of the Spirit must be set against the economic order called up through the economists and the banks, then again, through this lack of awareness, Ahriman will find an important instrument for preparing his incarnation. His incarnation is undoubtedly coming, and this lack of insight will enable him to prepare it triumphantly.

Such means can be used by Ahriman for a certain type of man. But there is another type — indeed the two are often mixed in one personality — and this also, from a different direction, provides Ahriman with an easy way to success.

Now it is a fact that in real life, total errors are not so harmful as half- or quarter-truths. Total errors are soon seen through, whereas half- and quarter-truths mislead people. They live with them, these partial truths become a pan of life and cause the most horrible devastation.

There are people today who do not realize the one-sidedness of the Galileo-Copernican world-conception, or who at least do not see its illusory character, or are too easygoing to examine it. We have just shown how wrong that is. But there are also people today, numberless people who acknowledge a certain half-truth, a very significant half-truth, and who do not go into the question of the purely hypothetical justification of it. Strange as it may appear to many people, it is just as one-sided to view the world solely through the Gospel and reject any other search into true reality, as it is to view the world from the standpoint of Galileo and Copernicus, or of university materialistic science in general.

The Gospel was given to those who lived in the first centuries of Christianity, and to believe that today the Gospel can give the *whole* of Christianity is simply a half-truth. It is therefore also a half-error which befogs people and thus furnishes Ahriman with the best means of attaining the goal and the triumph of his incarnation.

How numerous are those who think they are speaking out of Christian humility, but in reality out of dreadful arrogance, when they say: “Oh, we need no spiritual science! The homeliness, the simplicity of the Gospels leads us to what men need of the eternal!” A frightful arrogance is expressed, for the most part, in this apparent humility, which can very well be used by Ahriman in the sense I have indicated. For do not forget what I explained at the beginning of today’s lecture, how in the time in which the Gospel falls, men were still permeated by the Luciferic impulse in their thought, feeling and general views, and that they could understand the Gospel by a certain Luciferic Gnosis. But the grasp of the Gospel in this *old* sense is not possible today. No real understanding of the Christ can be gained if one relies merely on the Gospel, especially in the form in which it has been handed down. There exists nowhere today a less true understanding of Christ than in the various faiths and confessions.

The Gospel must be deepened by spiritual science if we wish to gain an actual grasp of the Christ. It is then interesting to examine the separate Gospels and arrive at their real content. To accept the Gospel as it is and as numberless people accept it today, and particularly as it is taught today, is not a path to Christ; it is a path away from Christ. Hence the confessions are moving further and further away from Christ. To what sort of Christ-conception does a man come who will accept the Gospel and only the Gospel, without the depth given by spiritual science? He comes ultimately to a Christ — but that is the utmost that he can reach through the Gospel alone. It is not a reality of the Christ, for today only spiritual science can lead to that. What the Gospel leads to is an hallucination of the Christ, a real inner picture or vision, yet *only* a picture. The Gospel today provides the way to come to a vision of the Christ, but not to the reality of Christ. That is just the reason why modern theology has become so materialistic. Theological commentators and expounders of the Gospel have asked themselves: What is to be made of the Gospel? They decide at length that in their view the result is similar to what one gets when one examines the case of Paul before Damascus. And then these theologians, who are supposed to confirm Christianity, but who really undermine it, say: Paul was simply ill, suffering from nerves and he had a vision before Damascus.

The point is that through the Gospel itself one can come only to hallucinations, to visions, but not to realities; the Gospel does not give us the real Christ, but only an hallucination of the Christ. The real Christ must be sought today through all that can be gained from a spiritual knowledge of the world.

These very people who swear by the Gospel alone and reject every kind of real spiritual knowledge, form the beginning of a flock for Ahriman when he appears in human shape in modern civilization. From these circles, from these members of confessions and sects who repulse the concrete knowledge brought by spiritual endeavor, whole hosts will develop as adherents of Ahriman. Now this is all beginning to come into existence. It is there, it is at work in present humanity and one who speaks to men today with the knowledge of spiritual science speaks into it, no matter whether he is speaking on social or other questions. He knows where the hostile powers lie, that they live supersensibly and that men are their poor misguided victims. This is the call to humanity: “Free yourselves from all these things that form such a great temptation to contribute to Ahriman’s triumph!”

Many people have felt something of this sort. But there is not yet courage everywhere to come to an understanding with the historical impulses of the Christ, Lucifer and Ahriman in the urgent way that is necessary and that is emphasized by Anthroposophy. Even those who have an idea of what is necessary will not go far enough. For instance, look at examples where there arises some knowledge that the secular materialistic science with this Ahrimanic character must be permeated with the Christ Impulse, and how, on the other hand, the Gospel must be illuminated through the explanations of spiritual science. Consider how many people struggle to the point of really shedding light in either of these directions by means of spiritual-scientific knowledge! Yet humanity will only acquire the right attitude to the earthly

incarnation of Ahriman if it sees through these things and has the courage, will and energy to illumine both secular science and the Gospel by the Spirit. Otherwise the result is always superficialities. Think, for example, of how Cardinal Newman — who, after all, was an enlightened man, one who followed modern religious development — at the time of his investiture as Cardinal in Rome stated openly in his address that if the Christian Catholic teaching was to survive, a new revelation was necessary. We have no need, however, of a new revelation; the time of revelations in the old sense is over. We need a new science, one that is illumined by the Spirit. But men must have the courage for such a new science.

Think of a literary phenomenon like the Lux Mundi movement that originated with certain eminent theologians, members of the English High Church, at the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties of the last century. It consisted of a series of studies, imbued throughout with the endeavor to build a bridge from secular science to the contents of dogma. One might call it a floundering hither and thither, never a bold grasping of secular science, never an illumination of it with the spirit. There was no unprejudiced examination of the Gospel with the knowledge that the Gospel of itself is not enough today, that it must be elucidated and illumined. But mankind must be courageous in both directions and say: secular science by itself leads to illusion, the Gospel by itself leads to hallucination. The middle way between illusion and hallucination is found only by grasping reality through the Spirit. That is the point.

We must see through such things as these today. Purely mundane science would make men entirely subject to illusion; in fact ultimately they would commit only follies. Quite enough folly is perpetuated today already, for surely the World War catastrophe was a great folly! Yet many people were involved in it who were thoroughly saturated with the official secular science of our time. And if you notice what remarkable psychological phenomena at once crop up when some sect or other places *one* of the four Gospels in the foreground, then you will more easily understand what I have been saying about the Gospels today. See how strongly inclined to all sorts of hallucinations are sects that pay heed solely to the Gospel of St. John, or solely the Gospel of St. Luke! Fortunately there are four Gospels, which outwardly contradict one another, and this has so far prevented the great harm which such one-sidedness would cause. By being faced with four Gospels people do not go too far in the direction of the one, but have the others beside it. One Gospel is read aloud on one Sunday and another on another Sunday and so the illusory power of the one is counterbalanced by that of another. A great wisdom lies in the fact that these four Gospels have come down to the civilized world. In this way man is protected from being caught up by some one stream, which will take possession of him — as in the case of so many members of sects — if he is influenced by one Gospel alone. When solely *one* Gospel works upon him it is particularly clear how this leads at last to hallucination.

In fact, it is essential today to give up much of one's subjective inclination, much of what one is attached to and thinks pious or clever. Mankind must above all seek universality and the courage to look at things from all sides.

I wished to say this to you today so that you may realize that what one tries now to bring about within humanity has truly deeper grounds than just some sort of subjective prejudice. In fact one can say that it is read from the signs of the times and that *it must be brought about*.

**Zurich, 27 Oct 1919.**

### **GA 191 – Dornach, 1 Nov 1919.**

If [...] ancient paganism is rightly understood, it will be found to contain sublime, deeply penetrating wisdom, but no *moral impulses* for human action. These impulses were not really essential to humanity, for unlike what now passes as human knowledge, human insight, this old pagan wisdom gave one the feeling of being membered into the whole cosmos. People moving about the earth not only felt themselves composed of the substances and forces present around them in earthly life, in the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, but they felt that the forces operating, for example, in the movements of the stars and the sun were playing into them. This feeling of being a member of the whole cosmos was not a mere abstraction, for from the Mysteries they received directives based on the laws of the stars for their actions and whole conduct of life. This ancient star-wisdom was in no way akin to the arithmetical astrology sometimes considered valuable today, but it was a wisdom voiced by the initiates in such a way that impulses for individual action and conduct went forth from the Mysteries. Not only did human beings feel safe and secure within the all-prevailing wisdom of the cosmos, but those whom they recognized as the initiates of the Mysteries imparted this wisdom in directives for their actions from morning till evening on given days of the year. Yet, neither Chaldean nor Egyptian wisdom contained a single moral impulse from what had been imparted by the initiates in this way. The moral impulse in its real sense was prepared by Judaism and then further developed in Christianity.

Inevitably the question arises: Why is it that this sublime pagan wisdom, although it contained no moral impulse, was able, for example in ancient Greece, to come to flower in such beauty of art and grandeur of philosophy?

If we were to go much farther back, to a time more than three thousand years before the Christian era, we should find that together with the promptings of wisdom there *did* come a moral impulse, that the moral principles, the ethics needed by these people of old were contained in this wisdom. But a specific *ethos*, a specific moral impulse such as came with Christianity was not an integral part of paganism. Why was this? It was because through the

millennia directly preceding Christianity, this pagan wisdom was inspired from a place far away in Asia, inspired by a remarkable being who had been incarnated in the distant East in the third millennium before Christ — namely, Lucifer.

To the many things we have learned about the evolution of humanity, this knowledge too must be added: that just as there was the incarnation which culminated in Golgotha, the incarnation of Christ in the man Jesus of Nazareth, there was an actual incarnation of Lucifer in far-off Asia, in the third millennium B.C. And the source of inspiration for much ancient culture was what can only be described as an earthly incarnation of Lucifer in a man of flesh and blood. Even Christianity, even the Mystery of Golgotha as enacted among human beings, was understood at first by the only means then available, namely the old luciferic wisdom. The one-sidedness of the gnosis, for all its amazing profundity, stems from the influence that had spread from this Lucifer incarnation over the whole of the ancient world. The significance of the Mystery of Golgotha cannot be fully grasped without the knowledge that rather less than three thousand years previously, there had been the incarnation of Lucifer.

In order that the luciferic inspiration might be lifted away from its one-sidedness, there came the incarnation of Christ and with it the impulse for the education and development of European civilization and its American offshoot. But since the middle of the fifteenth century, since the impulse for the development of individuality, of personality, has been at work, this phase of evolution has also contained within it certain forces whereby preparation is being made for the incarnation of another super-sensible Being. Just as there was an incarnation of Lucifer in the flesh and an incarnation of Christ in the flesh, so, before only a part of the third millennium of the post-Christian era has elapsed, there will be, in the West, an actual incarnation of Ahriman: Ahriman in the flesh. Humanity on earth cannot escape this incarnation of Ahriman. It will come inevitably. But what matters is that people shall find the right vantage point from which to confront it.

Whenever preparation is being made for incarnations of this character, we must be alert to certain indicative trends in evolution. A being like Ahriman, who will incarnate in the West in time to come, prepares for this incarnation in advance. With a view to his incarnation on the earth, Ahriman guides certain forces in evolution in such a way that they may be of the greatest possible advantage to him. And evil would result were people to live on in a state of drowsy unawareness, unable to recognize certain phenomena in life as preparations for Ahriman's incarnation in the flesh. The right stand can be taken only by recognizing in one or another series of events the preparation that is being made by Ahriman for his earthly existence. And the time has now come for individual human beings to know what tendencies and events around them are machinations of Ahriman, helping him to prepare for his approaching incarnation.

It would undoubtedly be of the greatest benefit to Ahriman if he could succeed in preventing the vast majority of people from perceiving what would make for their true well-being, if the vast majority of people were to regard these preparations for the Ahriman incarnation as

progressive and good for evolution. If Ahriman were able to slink into a humanity unaware of his coming, that would gladden him most of all. It is for this reason that the occurrences and trends in which Ahriman is working for his future incarnation must be brought to light.

One of the developments in which Ahriman's impulse is clearly evident is the spread of the belief that the mechanistic, mathematical conceptions inaugurated by Galileo, Copernicus, and others, explain what is happening in the cosmos. That is why anthroposophical spiritual science lays such stress upon the fact that *spirit* and *soul* must be discerned in the cosmos, not merely the mathematical, mechanistic laws put forward by Galileo and Copernicus as if the cosmos were some huge machine. It would augur success for Ahriman's temptings if people were to persist in merely calculating the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, in studying astrophysics for the sole purpose of ascertaining the material composition of the planets — an achievement of which the modern world is so proud. But woe betide if this Copernicanism is not confronted by the knowledge that the cosmos is permeated by soul and spirit. It is this knowledge that Ahriman, in preparing his earthly incarnation, wants to withhold. He would like to keep people so obtuse that they can grasp only the mathematical aspect of astronomy. Therefore he tempts many people to carry into effect their repugnance to knowledge concerning soul and spirit in the cosmos. That is only one of the forces of corruption poured by Ahriman into human souls. Another means of temptation connected with his incarnation — he also works in cooperation with the luciferic forces — another of his endeavors is to preserve the already widespread attitude that for the public welfare it is sufficient if the economic and material needs of humanity are provided for. Here we come to a point that is not willingly faced in modern life. Official science nowadays contributes nothing to real knowledge of the soul and spirit, for the methods adopted in the orthodox sciences are of value only for apprehending external nature, including the external human constitution. Just think with what contempt average citizens today regard anything that seems idealistic, anything that seems to be a path leading in any way to the spiritual. At heart they are always asking: What is the good of it? How will it help me to acquire this world's goods? They send their sons to a private school, having perhaps been to one themselves; they send them on to a university or institute of advanced studies. But all this is done merely in order to provide the foundations for a career, in other words, to provide the material means of livelihood.

And now think of the consequences of this. What numbers of people there are today who no longer value the spirit for the sake of the spirit or the soul for the sake of the soul! They are out to absorb from cultural life only what is regarded as "useful." This is a significant and mysterious factor in the life of modern humanity and one that must be lifted into the full light of consciousness. Average citizens, who work assiduously in their offices from morning till evening and then go through the habitual evening routine, will not allow themselves to get mixed up with what they call the "twaddle" to be found in anthroposophy. It seems to them entirely redundant, for they think: that is something one cannot eat! It finally comes to this — although people will not admit it — that in ordinary life nothing in the way of knowledge is considered really useful unless it helps to put food in the mouth!

In this connection people today have succumbed to a strange fallacy. They do not believe that the spirit can be eaten, and yet the very ones who say this, *do* eat the spirit! Although they may refuse to accept anything spiritual, nevertheless with every morsel that passes through the mouth into the stomach they are devouring the spiritual, but dispatching it along a path other than the path which leads to the real well-being of mankind.

I believe that many Europeans think it is to the credit of their civilization to be able to say: We are not cannibals! But these Europeans and their American affinities are, none the less, devourers of soul and spirit! The soulless devouring of material food leads to the side-tracking of the spirit. It is difficult to say these things today, for in the light of such knowledge just think what would have to be said of a large section of modern culture! To keep people in the state of being devourers of the soul and spirit is one of Ahriman's impulses in preparation for his incarnation. To the extent to which people can be roused into conducting their affairs not for material ends alone and into regarding a free and independent spiritual life, equally with economic life, as an integral part of the social organism — to that same extent Ahriman's incarnation will be awaited with an attitude worthy of humanity.

Another tendency in modern life of benefit to Ahriman in preparing his incarnation is all that is so clearly in evidence in *nationalism*. Whatever can separate people into groups, whatever can alienate them from mutual understanding the whole world over and drive wedges between them, strengthens Ahriman's impulse. In reality we should recognize the voice of Ahriman in what is so often proclaimed nowadays as a new ideal: "Freedom of the peoples, even the smallest," and so forth. But blood relationship has ceased to be the decisive factor and if this outworn notion persists, we shall be playing straight into the hands of Ahriman. His interests are promoted, too, by the fact that people are taken up with the most divergent shades of party opinions, of which the one can be justified as easily as the other. A socialist party program and an anti-socialist program can be supported by arguments of equal validity. And if people fail to realize that this kind of "proof" lies so utterly on the surface that the No and the Yes can both be justified with our modern intelligence — useful as it is for natural science but not for a different kind of knowledge — if people do not realize that this intelligence lies entirely on the surface in spite of serving economic life so effectively, they will continue to apply it to social life and spiritual life irrespectively. One group will prove one thing, another it's exact opposite, and as both proofs can be shown to be equally logical, hatred and bitterness — of which there is more than enough in the world — will be intensified. These trends too are exploited by Ahriman in preparation for his earthly incarnation.

Again, what will be of particular advantage to him is the short-sighted, narrow conception of the Gospel that is so prevalent today. You know how necessary it has become in our time to deepen understanding of the Gospels through spiritual science. But you also know how widespread is the motion that this is not fitting, that it is reprehensible to bring any real knowledge of the spirit or of the cosmos to bear upon the Gospels; it is said that the Gospels



must be taken “in all their simplicity,” just as they stand. I am not going to raise the issue that we no longer possess the *true* Gospels. The translations are not faithful reproductions of the authentic Gospels, but I do not propose to go into this question now. I shall merely put before you the deeper fact, namely that no true understanding of Christ can be reached by the simple, easy going perusal of the Gospels beloved by most religious denominations and sects today. At the time of the Mystery of Golgotha and for a few centuries’ afterward, a conception of the real Christ was still possible, because accounts handed down by tradition could be understood with the help of the pagan, luciferic wisdom. This wisdom has now disappeared, and what sects and denominations find in the Gospels does not lead people to the real Christ for whom we seek through spiritual science, but to an illusory picture, at most to a sublimated hallucination of Christ.

The Gospels cannot lead to the real Christ unless they are illumined by spiritual science. Failing this illumination, the Gospels as they stand give rise to what is no more than hallucination of Christ’s appearance in world history. This becomes very evident in the theology of our time. Why does modern theology so love to speak of the “simple man of Nazareth” and to identify the Christ with Jesus of Nazareth — whom it regards as a man only a little more exalted than other great figures of history? It is because the possibility of finding the real Christ has been lost, and because what people glean from the Gospels leads to hallucination, to a kind of illusion. An illusory conception of Christ is all that can be gleaned through the way in which the Gospels are read today — not the *reality* of Christ. In a certain sense this has actually dawned on the theologians and many of them are now describing Paul’s experience on the way to Damascus as a “vision.” They have come to the point of realizing that their way of studying the Gospels can lead only to a vision, to hallucination. I am not saying that this vision is false or untrue, but that it is merely an *inner* experience, unconnected with the reality of the Christ being. I do not use the word “illusion” with the side-implication of falsity, but I wish only to stress that the Christ Being is here a subjective, inner experience, of the same character as hallucination. If people could be brought to a standstill at this point, not pressing on to the real Christ but contenting themselves with a hallucination of Christ, Ahriman’s aims would be immeasurably furthered.

The influence of the Gospels also leads to hallucinations when one Gospel alone is taken as the basis of belief. Truth to tell, this principle has been forestalled by the fact that we have been given *four* Gospels, representing four different aspects, and it does not do to take each single Gospel word-for-word on its own, when outwardly there are obvious contradictions. To take one single Gospel word-for-word and disregard the other three is actually dangerous. What you find in sects whose adherents swear by the literal content of the Gospel of St. Luke alone or that of St. John alone is an illusory conception arising from a certain dimming of consciousness. With the dimming of consciousness that inevitably occurs when the deeper content of the Gospels is not revealed, people would fall wholly into Ahriman’s service, helping in a most effective way to prepare for his incarnation, and adopting toward him the very attitude he desires.

And now another uncomfortable truth for humankind today! Living in the arms of their denominations, people say: “We do not need anthroposophy or anything of the kind; we are content with the Gospels in all their simplicity.” They insist that this is said out of “humility.” In reality, however, it is the greatest arrogance! For it means that such persons, making use of ideas which have been presented to them through their birth and surge out of their blood, are deigning to rule out the deeper treasures of wisdom to be discovered in the Gospels. These “humblest” of human beings are generally the most arrogant of all, especially in the sects and denominations. The point to remember is, however, that the people who do most to prepare for the incarnation of Ahriman are those who constantly preach. “All that is required is to read the Gospels word-for-word-nothing more than that!”

Strange to say, in spite of their radical differences, the two parties play into each other’s hands: those whom I called “devourers of soul and spirit” and those who demand the literal, word-for-word reading of the Gospels. Each party plays into the hands of the other, furthering the preparation of Ahriman’s incarnation. For if the outlook of the “devourers of soul and spirit” on the one side and that of professed Christians who refuse to enter into the deeper truths of the Gospels on the other were to hold the day, then Ahriman would be able to make all human beings on the earth his own. A good deal of what is spreading in external Christianity today is a preparation for Ahriman’s incarnation. And in many things which arrogantly claim to represent true belief, we should recognize the preparation for Ahriman’s work.

Words nowadays do not really convey the innermost reality of things. As I have often told you, far too much store is set upon words — for words do not necessarily lead to that reality; nowadays indeed it is rather a case of words separating people from the real nature of things in the world. And this they do most of all when people accept ancient records such as the Gospels with “simple understanding” — as the saying goes. But there is a far truer simplicity in trying to penetrate to the in dwelling spirit of things and to understand the Gospels themselves from the vantage ground of the spirit.

As I told you, Ahriman and Lucifer will always work hand in hand. The only question is which of the two predominates in human consciousness at a particular epoch of time. It was a preeminently luciferic culture that persisted until after the Mystery of Golgotha — a culture inspired by the incarnation of Lucifer in China in the third millennium B.C. Many influences of this incarnation continued to radiate and were still powerful in the early Christian centuries; indeed they are working to this day.

But now that we are facing an incarnation of Ahriman in the third millennium after Christ, Lucifer’s tracks are becoming less visible, and Ahriman’s activities in such trends as I have indicated are coming into prominence. Ahriman has made a kind of pact with Lucifer, the import of which may be expressed in the following way. Ahriman, speaking to Lucifer, says: “I, Ahriman, find it advantageous to make use of ‘preserving jars.’ To you I will leave people’s stomachs, if you will leave it to me to lull them to sleep — that is to say to lull their

consciousness to sleep where their stomachs are concerned.”

You must understand what I mean by this. The consciousness of those human beings whom I have called devourers of soul and spirit is in a condition of dimness so far as their stomachs are concerned; for, by not accepting the spiritual into their human nature, they drive straight into the luciferic stream everything they introduce into their stomachs. What people eat and drink without spirituality goes straight to Lucifer!

And what do I mean by “preserving jars?” I mean libraries and institutions of a similar kind, where the various sciences pursued by human beings without really stirring their interest are preserved; these sciences are not really alive in them but are simply preserved in the books on the shelves of libraries. All this knowledge has been separated from human beings. Everywhere there are books, books, books! Themselves students, when they take their doctor’s degree, have to write a learned thesis which is then put into as many libraries as possible. When the students want to take up some particular post, again they must write a thesis! In addition to this, people are forever writing, although only a very small proportion of what they write is ever read. Only when some special preparation has to be made do people resort to what is mouldering away in libraries. These “preserving jars” of wisdom are a particularly favorable means of furthering Ahriman’s aims.

This kind of thing goes on everywhere. It could only be to some purpose if people took a really live interest in it, but they do not, its existence is entirely separate and apart. Just think — if one were so disposed one might well despair — just think, for example, of a lawsuit where a lawyer has to be engaged to plead the case. The time comes when one has to discuss the matter. Documents pile up! The lawyer has them all there in a dossier, but when one starts talking, this lawyer has no inkling of the circumstances. The papers are turned over and over without getting anywhere; the lawyer has no connection at all with the documents. Here is one portfolio full of them, there another. The number of documents grows and grows but as for interest in them — that is simply nonexistent! These professional people make one despair when one has dealings with them; they really know nothing about the matter at issue, have no connection with it, for everything remains in the documents. These are the little preserving jars and the libraries are the big preserving jars of soul and spirit. Everything is preserved in them but human beings do not want to connect themselves with it, to permeate it with their interest. And finally there arises the mood which does not want the head to play any part in a professed view of the world. But after all, the head, or some element of the head, is necessary for any understanding! What people like is to base their religious faith, their view of the world, on the heart alone. The heart must play a part, of course; but the way in which people today often speak of their religion reminds me of a saying much quoted in the district where my youth was spent. It was to this effect: “There is something very special about love. If you buy it, you buy the heart only and the head is thrown in gratis.” This is more or less the attitude which people today like to adopt in their view of life; they would like to take in everything through the heart, as they say, without exerting the head at all. The

heart cannot beat without the head, but the heart is well able to take things in if by “heart” here one really means the stomach! And then, what ought to be achieved through the head is supposed to be thrown in gratis, especially where the most important things in life are concerned. It is very important indeed to pay heed to these matters, because in observing them it becomes evident what earnestness must be applied to life at this juncture, how necessary it is to learn from the illusions to which even the Gospels may give rise, and how dearly humankind today loves those illusions.

Truth is beyond the reach of the kind of knowledge for which people aspire today. They feel on secure ground when they can reckon by means of figures, when they can prove things by statistics. With statistics and figures Ahriman has an easy game; it suits him admirably when some erudite scholar points out, for example, that conditions in the Balkans are due to the fact that the population of Macedonia consists of so many Greeks, so many Serbs, so many Bulgarians. Nothing can stand up against figures because of the faith that is reposed in them; and Ahriman is only too ready to exploit figures for his purposes. But later on one begins to see just how “reliable” such figures are! Admittedly, figures are sometimes a means of proof, but if one goes beyond them and investigates more closely, one often notices things like the following. In the statistics of Macedonia, for example, a father may be put down as a Greek, one son as a Serb, another son as a Bulgarian; so the father is counted in with the Greeks, one son with the Serbs, and the other with the Bulgarians. What would really help one to get at the truth, however, would be to discover how it has happened that in the same family one is said to be Greek, one Serbian, and one Bulgarian, and how this affects the figures — rather than simply accepting the figures that people find so satisfactory today. If the father is Greek then naturally the sons are Greek too. Figures are means whereby people are led astray in a direction favorable to Ahriman for his future incarnation in the third millennium A.D.

**Dornach, 1 Nov 1919.**

### **GA 191 – Dornach, 2 Nov 1919.**

The lecture yesterday will have shown you that if we are to acquire insight into the nature and evolution of humanity, we must be constantly mindful of the power and influence of Lucifer, of Christ, and of Ahriman.

These influences were, of course, already at work in earlier stages of cosmic evolution, but in spheres where it was unnecessary for people to have clear consciousness of their effects. On the other hand, the very purpose of our fifth post-Atlantean epoch is that human beings should become increasingly conscious of what takes effect through them in earthly existence. The unveiling of many more of the secrets of human life would be desirable at the present time if only there were greater willingness to face things frankly and objectively. For without the knowledge of certain facts of the kind indicated yesterday, it will not be possible for humanity to make progress either in the inner life or in the sphere of social life. Think only of something that is connected with the social problems we have recently been studying. It has

been our aim to demonstrate the necessity for separating the spiritual life, and also the political life or life of rights, from the economic life. Our greatest concern is to create conditions throughout the world, or at least — for we cannot do more at present — to convince people of the necessity for conditions which would provide the foundation for a free spiritual life no longer dependent upon the other spheres of social life or as deeply entangled as it is today in the economic life on the one side and in the political life of the state on the other. Civilized humankind must either establish the independence of the spiritual life or face collapse — with the inevitable result of an Asiatic influence taking effect in the future.

Those who still do not recognize the gravity of the present situation in the world are also, in a certain respect, helping to prepare for Ahriman's incarnation. Many things in external life today bear witness to this. The ahrimanic incarnation will be greatly furthered if people fail to establish a free and independent spiritual life and allow it to remain entangled in the economic or political life. For the ahrimanic power has everything to gain by the spiritual life being even more closely intermingled with these other spheres. To the ahrimanic power a free spiritual life would denote a kind of darkness, and people's interest in it, a burning, raging fire. The establishment of this free spiritual life is essential in order that the right attitude, the right relationship, may be adopted to Ahriman's incarnation in the future.

But there is still a strong tendency today to conceal the facts of which we spoke yesterday. The vast majority of people cast a veil over these things; they refuse to see them as they really are and allow themselves to be deceived by words which have no connection with reality. And very often, endeavors to shirk reality are described as "honest" and "well-meaning."

Take, for example, the recently published letter of Romain Rolland, in which he says that people should not allow themselves to be deluded by erstwhile proclamations of the victorious powers concerning justice and the upholding of political rights. The treatment which Russia is receiving from the Entente has led him to speak in these terms. He says: No matter whether it be on the part of monarchies or republics — what has been said about rights and justice is so much phrase mongering; the issue at bottom is one of power, and of power alone.

Now even the apparent approach to reality still betrays willingness to be deluded, for Romain Rolland is just as deluded as ever; the delusion is not one whit less. It could only be so if such people were to discard phrases and recognize that all these things for which they aspire are meaningless as long as they fail to realize that if the old unified state as such — whether a democracy, a republic or a monarchy — does not become threefold, this is simply a way of helping Ahriman's incarnation. Hence all these things, including this recent letter addressed to the world by Romain Rolland, amount to nothing more than rhetorical harangues. People do not grasp the reality, for reality can be grasped only when the necessity for spiritual knowledge and deep penetration into the nature of things is thoroughly understood.

You are all familiar with the much quoted verse: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a God.” Do people really take these lines in earnest? They utter them, but so often as mere phrases! No particular emphasis is laid on the tense: “In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was* with God, and the Word *was* God.” “Word” here must obviously have the meaning it bore in ancient Greece. It is not “word” as understood today — word as mere sound — but it is the inner, spiritual reality. In either case, however, it is the imperfect tense that is employed. The implication therefore is: “In the beginning the Word *was*; but it is no longer.” Otherwise the sentence would run: “Now is the Word; and the Word is not with God; it *was* with God, and a God *was* the Word but is so no longer.” This, moreover, is what stands in the Gospel of St. John; otherwise what would be the meaning of the words immediately following: “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” This indicates a further evolution of the Word. “Word” also means anything that human beings can acquire in the way of intellectual wisdom through their efforts and through their intelligence. But it must be quite clear to us that what “word” denotes here is not really the goal for which humanity must strive at the present time or in the immediate future. To express what is now the goal, we should have to say: “Let human beings seek for the Spirit that reveals itself in the Word; for the Spirit is with God, and the Spirit is a God.” Humankind must press on from the word to the spirit, to perception and knowledge of the spirit.

When I remind you of these first verses of the Gospel of St. John, you will realize what little inclination there is today to take such things in earnest and to surmount the arbitrary interpretations so often accepted in matters of the greatest moment. Human intelligence itself must be quickened and illumined by what is revealed in spiritual vision — not that actual seership is essential; what matters is that the fruits of spiritual vision shall be understood. I have repeatedly emphasized that today it is not the seer alone who can apprehend the truth of clairvoyant experience; this apprehension is within the power of everyone at the present time, because the spiritual capacities of human beings are sufficiently mature if they will but resolve to exercise them and are not too indolent to do so. But if the level befitting humanity is to be achieved, such things as were mentioned in the lecture yesterday must be taken in deep earnestness! I used a trivial example to show you how easy it is to be deluded by figures and numbers. Is there not a great deal of superstition where numbers are concerned? What can in some *way* be *counted* is accepted in science. Natural science loves to weigh, to compute, and social science loves statistics — again a matter of computation and reckoning. It will be difficult indeed for people to bring themselves to admit that all knowledge of the external world acquired through measure and number is so much delusion.

To measure — what does it mean, in reality? It means to compare something with a given dimension, be it length or volume. I can measure a line if I compare it with a line twice, three times, four times, etc., smaller:

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## Diagram 1

In such measurements, no matter whether of lengths or surfaces or weights, the *qualitative* element is entirely lacking. The number three always remains the same, whether one is counting sheep, human beings, or politicians.

It is not a matter of the qualitative, but only of the quantum, the quantitative. The essential principle of volume and number is that the qualitative is left out of account. But for that very reason, all knowledge derived from the principles of volume and measure is illusion; and the fact which must be taken in all seriousness is that the moment we enter the world that can be weighed and measured, the world of space and time, we enter a world of illusion, a world that is nothing but a *fata morgana* as long as we take it to be reality. It is the ideal of present-day thinking to experience in connection with all the things of the external world of space and time, their spatial and temporal significance; whereas, in truth, what things signify in space and time is their external aspect only, and we must transcend space and time, penetrating to much deeper levels, if we are to reach the innermost truth, the innermost *being* of things. And so a future must come when people will be able to say: “Yes, with my intelligence I can apprehend the external world in the way that is the ideal of natural science. But the vista thus presented to me is wholly *ahrimanic*.” This does not mean that natural science is to be ignored or put aside; it is a matter of realizing that this natural science leads only to the *ahrimanic* illusion. Why, then, must people have natural science, in spite of the fact that it leads only to illusion? It is because in earth existence they are already on the descending curve of evolution. Of the fourth post-Atlantean epoch, the Greco-Latin epoch, it may be said that with respect to knowledge, humanity was, relatively speaking, at the zenith. But now, in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, human beings are on the path of decline, they are a being growing physically weaker, and to perceive the world in the way the Greeks perceived it would be too much for their strength.

That is something we are not told in history! Just imagine what modern historians would have to say about it — those worthy historians who describe Greece as if they were describing some region of their own time because they do not know that the Greeks looked out into nature with different eyes, listened with different ears from those of modern people. These historians do not tell us that modern human beings would suffer from constant headache or migraine if they were to see and hear in the outer world all that the Greeks saw and heard. The Greeks lived with infinitely greater intensity in the world of the senses. Our

own apprehension of this world has already weakened. To be able to bear it, a fata morgana has to be and is presented to us. And not only what we perceive with the senses but on account of our scientific conceptions we “dream” about the external world — that, most emphatically of all, is a fata morgana. The greatest dreamers where the external world is concerned are precisely those who pride themselves on being realistic in their thinking. Darwin and John Stuart Mill are fundamentally dreamers. The dreamers are the very people who claim to be thoroughgoing realists.

But neither must we give ourselves up entirely to our own inner life and impulses. From the way things have developed in the movement represented by the “Theosophical Society,” many of you will have realized that cultivation of the inner life alone, as attempted by numbers of people today, does not lead to the goal befitting humanity in the present age. For the all too prevalent tendency is to make no free resolve to transcend ordinary life and attain higher vision but rather to bring into prominence that in us which is not free. All kinds of hallucinatory tendencies, all kinds of faculties fraught with illusion come into play.

It should be realized that just as external science becomes ahrimanic, the higher development of our inner nature becomes luciferic if we give ourselves up to mystical experiences. The luciferic tendency wakens and becomes especially powerful in everyone who, without the self-training described in the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*, sets about any mystical deepening of the impulses already inherent in their nature. The luciferic tendency shows itself in everyone who begins to brood over experiences of their inner life, and it is extremely powerful in present-day humanity. It takes effect in egoism of which most people are entirely unaware. One comes across so many today who are quite satisfied when they can say of something they have done that they have no cause for self-reproach, that they did it to the best of their knowledge and according to their conscience. That is an entirely luciferic attitude. For in what we do in life the point is not whether or not we have cause to reproach ourselves; what really matters is that we shall take things objectively, with complete detachment, and in accordance with the course of objective facts. And the majority of people today make no effort to achieve this objective understanding or to acquire knowledge of what is necessary for world evolution.

Therefore spiritual science must emphasize the following: That Ahriman is actually preparing for his incarnation; where we can recognize how he is preparing for it; and with what attitude it must be confronted. In such questions the point is not to say: We do this or that in order that we may have no cause for self-reproach — but to learn to recognize the objective facts. We must come to know what is at work in the world, and act accordingly — for the world’s sake.

It all amounts to this, that modern people only speak truly of themselves when they say that they hover perpetually between two extremes: between the ahrimanic on the one side, where they are presented with an outer delusion, a fata morgana, and, on the other, the luciferic element within them which induces the tendency to illusions, hallucinations and the like. The ahrimanic tendencies in people today live themselves out in science, the luciferic tendencies,



in religion, while in art they swing between the one extreme and the other. In recent times the tendencies of some artists have been more luciferic — they are the expressionists; the tendencies of the others have been more ahrimanic — they are the impressionists. And then, vacillating between all this, there are the people who want to be neither the one nor the other, who do not rightly assess either the luciferic or the ahrimanic but want to avoid both. “Ahriman — no! — that I must not, will not do, for it would take me into the realm of the ahrimanic; that I must not, will not do, for it would take me into the realm of the luciferic!” They want to be virtuous, avoiding both the ahrimanic and the luciferic.

But the truth of the matter is that Lucifer and Ahriman must be regarded as two scales of a balance and it is we who must hold the beam in equipoise.

And how can we train ourselves to do this? By permeating what takes ahrimanic form within us with a strongly luciferic element. What is it that arises in modern people in an Ahrimanic form? It is his knowledge of the outer world. There is nothing more ahrimanic than this knowledge of the material world, for it is sheer illusion. Nevertheless if the fata morgana that arises out of chemistry, out of physics, out of astronomy and the like can fill us with fiery enthusiasm and interest, then through our interest — which is itself luciferic — we can wrest from Ahriman what is his own.

That, however, is just what human beings have no desire to do; they find it irksome. And many people who flee from external, materialistic knowledge are misconceiving their task and preparing the best possible incarnation for Ahriman in earth existence. Again, what wells up in our inmost being today is very strongly luciferic. How can we train ourselves rightly in this direction? By diving into it with our ahrimanic nature, that is to say, by trying to avoid all illusions about our own inner life and impulses and observing *ourselves* just as we observe the outer world. Modern people must realize how urgent it is to educate themselves in this way. Anyone who has an observant eye in these matters will often come across circumstances of which the following is an example.

A man tells someone how indignant he is with countless human beings. He describes minutely how this or that in *a*, in *b*, in *c*, and so on, angers him. He has not an inkling that he is simply talking about his own characteristics. This peculiarity in human beings was never so widespread as it is today. And those who believe they are free of it, are the greatest culprits. The essential is that people should approach their own inner nature with ahrimanic cold-bloodedness and dispassion. Their inner nature is still fiery enough even when cooled down in this way! There is no need to fear that it will be overcooled.

If the right stand is to be taken to Ahriman’s future incarnation, people must become more objective where their own impulses are concerned, and far, far more subjective where the external world is concerned — not by introducing pictures of fantasy but by bringing interest, alert attention, and devotion to the things of immediate life.

When people find one thing or another in outer life tedious, possibly because of the education they have received or because of other circumstances, the path which Ahriman wants to take for the benefit of his incarnation is greatly smoothed. Tedium is so widespread nowadays! I have known numbers of people who find it irksome to acquaint themselves for example with banking procedure, or the stock exchange, or single or double entry bookkeeping. But that is never the right attitude. It simply means that the point has not been discovered where a thing burns with interest. Once this point is reached, even a dry cashbook can become just as interesting as Schiller's *Maid of Orleans*, or Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, or anything else — even Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*. It is only a question of finding the point at which every single thing in life becomes interesting.

What I have just said may make you think that all these matters are very paradoxical. But in reality they are not. It is we who are paradoxical in our relationship to truth. What we must realize — and this is a dire necessity today — is that *we*, not the world, are at fault. Nothing does more to prepare the path for Ahriman's incarnation than to find this or that tedious, to consider oneself superior to one thing or another and refuse to enter into it. Again it is the same question of finding the point where everything is of interest. It is never a matter of a subjective rejection or acceptance of things, but of an objective recognition of the extent to which things are either luciferic or ahrimanic, with the result that the scales are overweighted on the one side or the other.

To be interested in something does not mean that one considers it justifiable. It means simply that one develops an inner energy to get to grips with it and steer it into the right channel.

As some of you may know — it is a long time ago now — a number of friends bought themselves books on mathematics. A kind of “sporting spirit” had crept into them! They bought the works of Lubsen [Heinrich Borchert Lubsen (1801-64).] but it was not long before most of the volumes found their way to library shelves and the mathematical knowledge was not much in evidence! This, of course, is not meant as a hint to tackle the matter again — I am making no such suggestion. But to come to grips with something in which; to begin with, one is not interested at all, in order that a new understanding of world existence may arise — that is of untold significance. For such things as I want to bring home to you in these lectures — how Lucifer and Ahriman intervene in the evolution of humankind side by side with the Christ impulse — these things must be taken in all earnestness and their consequences rightly assessed.

Had there been no luciferic wisdom, no understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha could have been acquired through the gnosis in the early centuries of Christendom. Understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha diminished with the fading of the luciferic wisdom. And where is there any evidence today of such understanding? The fact that understanding cannot be found through external, ahrimanic science is perceived by those who to some extent recognize its characteristics. Take, for example, a man like Cardinal Newman — a very significant figure in the sphere of religion during the second half of the nineteenth century. At his investiture as

Cardinal in Rome, he declared that he could see no salvation for the religious development of humankind other than a new revelation! [See his speech in Rome, May 12, 1879, when he had been raised to the rank of Cardinal. "... Hitherto the civil power has been Christian. Even in countries separated from the Church, as in my own, the *dictum* was in force, when I was young, that 'Christianity was the law of the land.' Now, everywhere that goodly framework of society, which is the creation of Christianity, is throwing off Christianity. The *dictum* to which I have referred, with a hundred others which followed upon it, is gone, or is going everywhere; and by the end of the century, unless the Almighty interferes, it will be forgotten." (*The Life of John Henry Newman*, by Wilfrid Ward, Vol. 2, p. 460.)] But there it remained. He himself showed no special inclination to receive anything of the new spiritual life that can now stream into humanity out of the spiritual worlds. What he said remained in the sphere of abstraction.

In very truth humanity needs a new revelation. Of this there is evidence on all sides. There have been discussions recently about the deterioration in morals and in the general attitude toward morality during the last four or five years. The conclusion reached is that denominational religious instruction must be introduced more intensively into the schools. But it cannot be emphasized often enough that this instruction was already being given and the times are supposed to have come under its influence. If the old denominational instruction is again to be introduced we shall simply be beginning the whole process over again. In a short time we shall be back where we were in 1914. It is in the highest degree important to realize that in the subconsciousness of human beings there are longings quite different in character from what comes to expression on the surface.

When we founded the Waldorf School in Stuttgart earlier this year, we were obliged to arrange for the religious instruction to be divided among the various clergy. A particular hour is devoted to religious instruction, which is given by a Catholic priest for the Catholic children and by an Evangelical pastor for the Evangelicals. I shall not speak of the difficulties that came from the side of the priests — that is a chapter by itself. What I do want to say, however, is that an immediate desire was expressed for religious teaching apart from any denomination. At first I thought that the attendance would be insignificant in comparison with the numbers attending the denominational instruction. But in spite of the fact that soon there will not be a single pulpit in Stuttgart from which invectives are not poured on Anthroposophy, a large number of children — five times as many as we expected — have asked for a kind of anthroposophical instruction in religion, and the class has had to be divided into two. Subjectively this may not be altogether welcome, for it may prove to be a rod for our own backs. But of that I do not want to speak. I want only to show that there is a longing for progress in human beings but that they are asleep and do not perceive that forces are keeping these longings in subjection. And moreover the courage to bring these longings to the surface is very largely lacking.

Just think what the effect could be of knowledge such as that of the future incarnation of Ahriman, who is preparing for it by means I have been describing both yesterday and today. It is essential to inform ourselves objectively about these things in order that we may take the right stand toward what is going on around us in the way of preparation for the Ahriman incarnation. Only if you apply deep and mature reflection to what has been said in these lectures about the ahrimanic currents will you be able to apprehend the gravity of the present situation.

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The attitude of soul formerly prevailing in human beings was preserved through the Mysteries, mainly through the Asiatic Mysteries. But in the fourth millennium B.C. and until the beginning of the third, humanity in general — when uninfluenced by the Mystery wisdom — lived an existence pervaded by a more or less dim, twilight consciousness. In Asia and the then-known world, it may be said that during the fourth and at the beginning of the third millennium before the Mystery of Golgotha, people's life of soul was dim and instinctive. But the Mysteries were there, into which, through the powerful rites and ceremonies, the spiritual worlds were able to penetrate. And it was from these centers that human beings received illumination.

At the beginning of the third millennium a momentous event took place. The root cause of this dim, more instinctive life may be characterized by saying that as beings of spirit and soul, people were still unable at that time to make use of the human organs of intellect. These organs were already within them, they had taken shape in their physical constitution, but the being of spirit and soul could not make use of them. Thus human beings could not acquire knowledge through their own thinking, through their own powers of intellectual discernment. They were dependent upon what was imparted to them from the Mysteries. And then, about the beginning of the third millennium, a momentous event took place in the east of Asia.

A child of a distinguished Asiatic family of the time was allowed to grow up in the precincts of the Mystery ceremonies. Circumstances were such that this child was actually permitted to take part in the ceremonies, undoubtedly because the priests conducting the rites in the Mysteries felt it as an inspiration that such a child must be allowed to participate. And when the being incarnate in that child had reached the age of about forty — approximately that age — something very remarkable came to light. It became evident — and there is no doubt at all that the priests of the Mysteries had foreseen the event prophetically — it became evident that this man who had been allowed to grow up in the precincts of one of the Mystery centers in East Asia, began suddenly, at the age of about forty, to grasp through the faculty of human intellect itself what had formerly come into the Mysteries through revelation, and only through revelation. He was as it were the first to make use of the organs of human intellect, but still in association with the Mysteries.

Translating into terms of our present language how the priests of the Mysteries spoke of this matter, we must say: In this man, Lucifer himself was incarnated — no more and no less than that! It is a significant, momentous fact that in the third millennium before Christ an incarnation of Lucifer in the flesh actually took place in the east of Asia. And from this incarnation of Lucifer in the flesh — for this being became a teacher — there went forth what is described as the pre-Christian, pagan culture which still survived in the gnosis of the earliest Christian centuries.

It would be wrong to pass derogatory judgment on this Lucifer culture. For all the beauty produced by Greek civilization, even the insight that is still alive in ancient Greek philosophy and in the tragedies of Aeschylus would have been impossible without this Lucifer incarnation.

The influence of the Lucifer incarnation was still powerful in the south of Europe, in the north of Africa, and in Asia Minor during the first centuries of Christendom. And when the Mystery of Golgotha had taken place on earth, it was essentially the luciferic wisdom through which it could be understood. The gnosis, which set about the task of grasping the import of the Mystery of Golgotha, was impregnated through and through with luciferic wisdom. It must therefore be emphasized, firstly, that at the beginning of the third millennium B.C. there was a Chinese incarnation of Lucifer; at the beginning of our own era the incarnation of Christ took place. And to begin with, the significance of the incarnation of Christ was grasped because the power of the old Lucifer incarnation still survived. This power did not actually fade from the human faculty of comprehension until the fourth century A.D.; and even then, it had its aftermath, its ramifications.

To these two incarnations, the Lucifer incarnation in ancient times and the incarnation of the Christ which gives the earth its meaning, a third incarnation will be added in a future not so very far distant. And the events of the present time are already moving in such a way as to prepare for it.

Of the incarnation of Lucifer at the beginning of the third millennium B.C., we must say: through Lucifer, human beings have acquired the faculty of using the organs of their intellect, of their power of intellectual discernment. It was Lucifer himself, in a human body, who was the first to grasp through the power of intellect what formerly could be imparted to humanity only through revelation, namely, the content of the Mysteries.

What is now in preparation and will quite definitely come to pass on earth in a none-too-distant future is an actual incarnation of Ahriman.

As you know, since the middle of the fifteenth century we have been living in an era in which it behoves humankind to come more and more into possession of the full power of *consciousness*. It is of the very greatest importance that people should approach the coming incarnation of Ahriman with full consciousness of this event. The incarnation of

Lucifer could be recognized only by the prophetic insight of the priests of the Mysteries. People were also very unconscious of what the incarnation of Christ and the event of Golgotha really signified. But they must live on toward the incarnation of Ahriman with full consciousness amid the shattering events which will occur on the physical plane. Amid the perpetual stresses of war and other tribulations of the immediate future, the human mind will become very inventive in the domain of physical life. And through this very growth of inventiveness in physical life — which cannot be averted in any way or by any means — the bodily existence of a human individuality in whom Ahriman can incarnate will become possible and inevitable.

From the spiritual world this Ahrimanic power is preparing for incarnation on the earth, endeavoring in every conceivable way to make such preparation that the incarnation of Ahriman in human form may be able to mislead and corrupt humankind on earth to the uttermost. A task of humankind during the next phase of civilization will be to live toward the incarnation of Ahriman with such alert consciousness that this incarnation can actually serve to promote a higher, spiritual development, inasmuch as through Ahriman himself humanity will become aware of what can, or shall we say, can *not* be achieved by physical life alone. But people must go forward with full consciousness toward this incarnation of Ahriman and become more and more alert in every domain, in order to recognize with greater and greater clarity those trends in life which are leading toward this Ahrimanic incarnation. People must learn from spiritual science to find the key to life and so be able to recognize and learn to control the currents leading toward the incarnation of Ahriman. It must be realized that Ahriman will live among people on the earth, but that in confronting him people will themselves determine what they may learn from him, what they may receive from him. This, however, they will not be able to do unless, from now onward, they take control of certain spiritual and also unspiritual currents which otherwise are used by Ahriman for the purpose of leaving humankind as deeply unconscious as possible of his coming; then, one day, he will be able to appear on earth and overwhelm people tempting and luring them to repudiate earth evolution, thus preventing it from reaching its goal. To understand the whole process of which I have been speaking, it is essential to recognize the character of certain currents and influences — spiritual or the reverse.

Do you not see the continually growing number of people at the present time who do not want any science of the spirit, any knowledge of the spiritual? Do you not see how numerous are the people to whom the old forces of religion no longer give any inner stimulus? Whether they go to church or not is a matter of complete indifference to large numbers of human beings nowadays. The old religious impulses mean nothing to them. But neither will they bring themselves to give a thought to what can stream into our civilization as new spiritual life. They resist it, reject it, regard it as folly, as something inconvenient; they will not allow themselves to have anything to do with it. But, you see, human beings as we live on earth are veritably a unity. Our spiritual nature cannot be separated from our physical nature; both work together as a unity between birth and death. And even if human beings do not receive

the spiritual through their faculties of soul, the spiritual takes effect, nevertheless. Since the last third of the nineteenth century the spiritual has been streaming around us; it is streaming into earthly evolution. The spiritual is there in very truth — only people are not willing to receive it.

But even if they do not accept the spiritual, it *is there!* And what becomes of it? Paradoxical as it may seem — for much that is true seems paradoxical to the modern mind — in those people who refuse the spiritual and like eating and drinking best of all things in life, the spiritual streams, unconsciously to them, into the processes of eating and digestion. This is the secret of that march into materialism which began about the year 1840, or rather was then in active preparation. Those who do not receive the spiritual through their souls receive it today nonetheless: in eating and drinking they eat and drink the spirit. They are “eaters” of the soul and spirit. And in this way the spirit that is streaming into earth evolution passes over into the luciferic element, is conveyed to Lucifer. Thereby the luciferic power, which can then be of help to the ahrimanic power for its later incarnation, is constantly strengthened. This must come to the knowledge of those who admit the fact that in the future people will either receive spiritual knowledge consciously or consume the spirit unconsciously, thereby delivering it into the hands of the luciferic powers.

This stream of spirit-and-soul-consumption is particularly encouraged by Ahriman because in this way he can lull humankind into greater and greater drowsiness, so that then, through his incarnation, he will be able to come among people and fall upon them unawares because they do not confront him consciously.

But Ahriman can also make direct preparation for his incarnation, and he does so. Certainly, people of our day also have a spiritual life, but it is purely intellectual, unconnected with the spiritual world. This purely intellectual life is becoming more and more widespread; at first it took effect mainly in the sciences, but now it is leading to mischiefs of every kind in social life as well. What is the essential character of this intellectual life?

This intellectual life has very little to do with the true interests of human beings! I ask you: how many teachers do you not see today, passing in and out of higher and lower educational institutions without bringing any inner enthusiasm to their science but pursuing it merely as a means of livelihood? In such cases the interest of the soul is not directly linked with the actual pursuit. The same thing happens even at school. Think how much is learned at the various stages of life without any real enthusiasm or interest, how external the intellectual life is becoming for many people who devote themselves to it! And how many there are today who are forced to produce a mass of intellectual material which is then preserved in libraries and, as spiritual life, is not truly alive!

Everything that is developing as intellectual life without being suffused by warmth of soul, without being quickened by enthusiasm, directly furthers the incarnation of Ahriman in a way that is after his own heart. It lulls people to sleep in the way I have described, so that its

results are advantageous to Ahriman.

There are numerous other currents in the spiritual or unspiritual life which Ahriman can turn to his advantage. You have lately heard — and you are still hearing it — that national states, national empires must be founded. A great deal is said about “freedom of the individual peoples.” But the time for founding empires based on relationships of blood and race is past and over in the evolution of mankind. [Quote 1] If an appeal is made today to national, racial, and similar relationships, to relationships arising out of the intellect and not out of the spirit, then disharmony among humankind will be intensified. And it is this disharmony among humankind which the ahrimanic power can put to special use. Chauvinism, perverted patriotism in every form — this is the material from which Ahriman will build just what he needs.

But there are other things as well. Everywhere today we see parties being formed for one object or another. People nowadays have no discernment, nor do they desire to have it where party opinions and party programs are concerned. With intellectual ingenuity, proof can be furnished in support of the most radically opposing theories. Very clever arguments can be used to prove the soundness of Leninism — but the same applies to directly contrary principles and also to what lies between the two extremes. An excellent case can be made out for every party program: but the one who establishes the validity of the opposite program is equally right. The intellectualism prevailing among people today is not capable of demonstrating the *inner* potentialities and values of anything. It can furnish proofs; but what is intellectually proved should not be regarded as of real value or efficacy in life. People oppose one another in parties because the soundness of every party opinion — at any rate the main party opinions — can be proved with equal justification. Our intellect remains at the surface layer of understanding and does not penetrate to the deeper layer where the truth actually lies. This, too, must be fundamentally and thoroughly understood.

People today prefer to let their intellect remain on the surface and not to penetrate with deeper forces to those levels where the essential nature of things is disclosed. It is only necessary to look around a little, for even where it takes its most external form, life often reveals the pitfalls of current predilections. People love numbers and figures in science, but they also love figures in the social sphere as well. Social science consists almost entirely of statistics. And from statistics, that is to say from figures, the weightiest conclusions are reached. Well, with figures too, anything can be proved and anything believed; for figures are not a means whereby the essential reality of things can be proved — they are simply a means of deception! Whenever one fails to look beyond figures to the *qualitative*, they can be utterly deceptive.

The following is an obvious example. There is, or at least there used to be, a great deal of argument about the nationality of the Macedonians. In the political life of the Balkan peninsula, much depended upon the statistics compiled there. The figures are of just as much value as those contained in other statistics. Whether statistics are compiled of wheat and rye



production, or of the numbers of Greek, Serbian, or Bulgarian nationals in Macedonia — in regard to what can be *proved by* these means it is all the same. From the figures quoted for the Greeks, for the Bulgarians, for the Serbians, very plausible conclusions can be drawn. But one can also have an eye for the qualitative element, and then one often finds it recorded that the father was Greek, one son was Bulgarian, another was Serbian. What is at the back of it you can puzzle out for yourselves! These statistics are taken as authoritative, whereas in this case they were compiled solely in support of party aims. It stands to reason that if the father is really a Greek, the two sons are also Greeks. But the procedure adopted there is just an example of many other things that are done with figures. Ahriman can achieve a great deal through figures and numbers used in this way as evidence of proof.

A further means of which Ahriman can avail himself is again one that will seem paradoxical. As you know, we have been concerned in our movement to study the Gospels in the light of spiritual science. But these deeper interpretations of the Gospels, which are becoming more and more necessary in our time, are rejected on all sides, just as spiritual science as a whole is rejected.

The people who often profess humility in these matters — and they are insistent about it — are actually the most arrogant of all. More and more generally it is being said that people should steep themselves in the very simplicity of the Gospels and not attempt to understand the Mystery of Golgotha by entering into the complexities of spiritual science. Those who feign unpretentiousness in their study of the Gospels are the most arrogant of all, for they despise the honest search for knowledge demanded in spiritual science. So arrogant are they that they believe the highest revelations of the spiritual world can be garnered without effort, simply by browsing on the simplicity of the Gospels. What claims to be “humble” or “simple” today is often supreme arrogance. In sects, in religious confessions — it is there that the most arrogant people are to be found:

It must be remembered that the Gospels came into existence at a time when the luciferic wisdom still survived. In the first centuries of Christendom, people’s understanding of the Gospels was quite different from what it came to be in later times. Today, people who cannot deepen their minds through spiritual science merely pretend to understand the Gospels. In reality they have no idea even of the original meaning of the words; for the translations that have been made into the different languages are not faithful reproductions of the Gospels; often they are scarcely even reminiscent of the original meaning of the words in which the Gospels were composed.

Real understanding of the intervention of the Christ being in earthly evolution is possible today only through spiritual science. Those who want to study, or actually do study the Gospels “without pretension” — as the saying goes — cannot come to any inner realization of the Christ being as he truly is, but only to an illusory picture, or, at very most, a vision or hallucination of the Christ being. No real connection with the Christ impulse can be achieved today merely through reading the Gospels — but only a hallucinatory picture of the Christ.

Hence the prevalence of the theological view that the Christ was not present in the man Jesus of Nazareth, who was simply an historical figure like Socrates or Plato or others, although possibly more exalted. The “simple man of Nazareth” is an ideal even to the theologians. And very few of them indeed can make anything of an event like Paul’s vision at the gate of Damascus, because without the deepened knowledge yielded by spiritual science the Gospels can give rise only to a hallucination of the Christ, not to vision of the real Christ. And so Paul’s vision at Damascus is also regarded as a hallucination.

Deeper understanding of the Gospels in the light of spiritual science is essential today, for the apathy that takes hold of people who are content to live merely within the arms of the denominations will be used to the utmost by Ahriman in order to achieve his goal — which is that his incarnation shall catch people unawares. And those who believe they are being most truly Christian by rejecting any development of the conception of the Christ mystery, are, in their arrogance, the ones who do most to promote Ahriman’s aims. The denominations and sects are positively spheres of encouragement, breeding-grounds for Ahriman. It is futile to gloss these things over with illusions. Just as the materialistic attitude, rejecting the spiritual altogether and contending that the human being is a product of what people eat and drink, furthers Ahriman’s aims, so are these aims furthered by the stubborn rejection of everything spiritual and adherence to the literal, “simple” conception of the Gospels.

You see, a barrier which prevents the single Gospels from unduly circumscribing the human mind has been erected through the fact that the event of Golgotha is described in the Gospels from four — seemingly contradictory — sides. Only a little reflection will show that this is a protection from too literal a conception. In sects, however, where one Gospel only is taken as the basis of the teaching — and such sects are quite numerous — pitfalls, stupefaction, and hallucination are generated. In their day, the Gospels were given as a necessary counterweight to the luciferic gnosis; but if no attempt is made to develop understanding of their content, the aims of Ahriman are furthered, not the progress of humankind. In the absolute sense, nothing is good in itself, but is always good or bad according to the use to which it is put. The best can be the worst if wrongly used. Sublime though they are, the Gospels can also have the opposite effect if people are too lazy to search for a deeper understanding based on spiritual science.

Hence there is a great deal in the spiritual and unspiritual currents of the present time of which people should be acutely aware, and determine their attitude of soul accordingly. Upon the ability and willingness to penetrate to the roots of such matters will depend the effect which the incarnation of Ahriman can have upon human beings, whether this incarnation will lead them to prevent the earth from reaching its goal, or bring home to them the very limited significance of intellectual, unspiritual life. If people rightly take in hand the currents leading toward Ahriman, then simply through his incarnation in earthly life they will recognize the ahrimanic influence on the one side, and on the other its polar opposite — the luciferic influence. And then the very contrast between the ahrimanic and the luciferic will enable

them to perceive the third reality. Human beings must consciously wrestle through to an understanding of this trinity of the Christian impulse, the ahrimanic and the luciferic influences; for without this consciousness they will not be able to go forward into the future with the prospect of achieving the goal of earth existence.

Spiritual science must be taken in deep earnestness, for only so can it be rightly understood. It is not the outcome of any sectarian whim but something that has proceeded from the fundamental needs of human evolution. Those who recognize these needs cannot choose between whether they will or will not endeavor to foster spiritual science. On the contrary they will say to themselves: The whole physical and spiritual life of human beings must be illumined and pervaded by the conceptions of spiritual science!

Just as once in the East there was a Lucifer incarnation, and then, at the midpoint, as it were, of world evolution, the incarnation of Christ, so in the West there will be an incarnation of Ahriman.

This ahrimanic incarnation cannot be averted; it is inevitable, for humanity must confront Ahriman face to face. He will be the individuality by whom it will be made clear what indescribable cleverness can be developed if they call to their help all that earthly forces can do to enhance cleverness and ingenuity. In the catastrophes that will befall humanity in the near future, people will become extremely inventive; many things discovered in the forces and substances of the universe will be used to provide human nourishment. But these very discoveries will at the same time make it apparent that matter is connected with the organs of intellect, not with the organs of the spirit but of the intellect. People will learn what to eat and drink in order to become really clever. Eating and drinking cannot make them spiritual, but clever and astute, yes. Humanity has no knowledge of these things as yet; but not only will they be striven for, they will be the inevitable outcome of catastrophes looming in the near future. And certain secret societies — where preparations are already in train — will apply these things in such a way that the necessary conditions can be established for an actual incarnation of Ahriman on the earth. This incarnation cannot be averted, for people must realize during the time of the earth's existence just how much can proceed from purely material processes! We must learn to bring under our control those spiritual or unspiritual currents which are leading to Ahriman.

**Bern, 4 November 1919.**

**GA 194 – Dornach, 21 Nov 1919.**

If we think of those beings which man regards as his own divine beings, we must say: we can feel and sense them in the right way only if we conceive of them as effecting the equilibrium between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic principles. We can never feel in the right way what we should feel as the Divine if we do not enter upon this threefold order. Consider from this point of view Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or Klopstock's *Messiah* which came into existence

under the influence of *Paradise Lost*. Here you have nothing of a real comprehension of a threefold world structure, you have instead a battle between the supposedly good and the supposedly evil, the battle between heaven and hell. You have the mistaken idea of the duad brought into man's spiritual evolution; you have what is rooted in popular consciousness as the illusory contrast between heaven and hell, introduced into two cosmic poems of modern times.

It is of no avail that Milton and Klopstock call the heavenly entities divine beings. They would only be so for man if they were conceived of on the basis of the threefold structure of world existence. Then it would be possible to say that a battle takes place between the good and the evil principles. But as the matter stands, a duad is assumed, the one member of which has the attributes of the good and receives a name derived from the divine, while the other member represents the diabolical, the anti-divine element. What does this really signify? Nothing less than the removal of the divine from consciousness and the usurping of the divine name by the Luciferic principle; so that in reality we have a battle between Lucifer and Ahriman; only, Ahriman is endowed with Luciferic attributes, and the realm of Lucifer is endowed with divine attributes.

You see the far-reaching consequences revealed by such a consideration. While human beings believe they are dealing with the divine and the diabolical elements when contemplating the contrasts described in Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Klopstock's *Messiah*, they are, in reality, dealing with the Luciferic and Ahrimanic elements. There is no consciousness present of the truly divine element; instead, the Luciferic element is endowed with divine names.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Klopstock's *Messiah* are spiritual creations which rise out of modern man's consciousness. That which manifests in them lives in the general consciousness of mankind; for the delusion of the duad has entered this modern consciousness, and the truth of the triad has been withheld. The most profound productions of the modern age which are, from a certain point of view, considered among the greatest creations of mankind, and rightly so, are a cultural maya and have sprung from the great delusion of modern mankind. Everything that is active in this illusory conception is the creation of the Ahrimanic influence, of that influence which in the future will concentrate in the incarnation of Ahriman of which I have already spoken. For this illusory conception in which we live today is nothing but the result of the false world view which springs up everywhere in modern civilization when human beings contrast heaven and hell. Heaven is considered to be the divine element, and hell the diabolical element, while, in truth, we have to do with the Luciferic element called heavenly and the Ahrimanic element called infernal.

You must realize what interests rule in modern spiritual history. Even the concept of the threefold nature of the human organism or the human being in its entirety has in a certain respect been abolished for occidental civilization by the eighth Œcumenical Council of Constantinople in the year 869. I have often mentioned this. The dogma was then established

that the Christian does not have to believe in the threefold human being but only in a twofold human being. The belief in body, soul and spirit was tabooed, and medieval theologians and philosophers who still knew a great deal about the true facts had a hard time to circumvent this truth, for the so-called trichotomy, the “membering” of the human being into body, soul, and spirit had been declared a heresy. They were compelled to teach the duality, namely, that man consists of body and soul, and not of body, soul and spirit. And certain beings, certain men know very well that it is of tremendous significance for human spiritual life if the threefoldness is replaced by twofoldness.

We must consider such profound aspects if we wish to understand correctly why in the August number of *Stimmen der Zeit (Voices of the Age)* the Jesuit priest Zimmermann draws attention to the fact that one of the recent decrees of the Holy Office in Rome prohibits Roman Catholics from obtaining absolution if they read or possess theosophical writings or participate in anything theosophical. The Jesuit priest Zimmermann interprets this decree in his article in *Die Stimmen der Zeit* by stating that it applies, above everything else, to my Anthroposophy, and that those who wish to be considered true Roman Catholics must not occupy themselves with anthroposophical literature. He quotes one of the main reasons for this, namely, that Anthroposophy differentiates between body, soul and spirit, and thus teaches a heresy opposed to the orthodox belief that man consists of body and soul.

**Dornach, 21 Nov 1919.**

### **GA 195 – Stuttgart, 25 Dec 1919.**

When we travel back through the periods of human evolution prior to the Mystery of Golgotha, we find, early in the course of Oriental civilization, within that civilization out of which the Chinese civilization of today has developed, a human personality who was the external incorporation of Lucifer. Lucifer really did walk the earth at that time, in a human body. He it was who brought that human light which we find at the foundation of the ancient pre-Christian wisdom, with the exception of Judaism. In the art, the philosophy, and the statesmanship of Greece, much was still active which had proceeded from this Luciferic incarnation thousands of years before the Mystery of Golgotha.

We must endeavour clearly to understand, that that which today we call human understanding is always, so long as we have not spiritualized it, a gift of that Lucifer. We must not hold merely, in a matter-of-fact, bourgeois way, the one-sided idea that anything Luciferic is dreadful, and we must get rid of it. The more we seek to get rid of Lucifer, the more we are dominated by him, for it was necessary during thousands of years of human evolution to enter into the inheritance of the incarnated Lucifer. Then came the Mystery of Golgotha. And a time will come in the future when, just as Lucifer was incorporated in the East in an earthly personality, to prepare for Christianity among the heathen, so in the West there will take place an earthly incarnation of Ahriman himself. This time is approaching. Ahriman will appear, objectively, on the earth. Just as truly as Lucifer has walked the Earth, and as Christ

has walked the Earth, objectively, in human form, so will Ahriman walk the Earth, bringing with him an extraordinary increase of power to the earthly human understanding. We men have not the task of hindering in any way this incarnation of Ahriman, but it is our task so to prepare humanity beforehand, that Ahriman may be estimated in the right way. For Ahriman will have tasks, he will have to do this and that, and men must value rightly and make a right use of that which, through Ahriman, comes into the world. Men will only be able to do this if they are able to adjust themselves now in the right way to that which Ahriman is already sending to the Earth from the Worlds beyond in order that he may control the Economic life upon Earth without being noticed. This must not be. Ahriman must not control the Economic life on the Earth without his being noticed. We must thoroughly learn to know his particular qualities. We must be able to oppose him with full consciousness.

During the time I am lecturing here at Stuttgart I shall point out much that we must carefully note in human evolution up to the time of the Ahriman incarnation, so that when this comes to pass we may know how rightly to assess it. Today I shall only call your attention to one thing more. In this respect many of the modern interpretations of the Gospels are just as bad as the worst materialistic conceptions. When the representatives of so-called religious societies accept the Gospels today simply as they are written, and when every new revelation is rejected, such devotion to the Gospels, such a way of furthering Christianity, is really the best way to prepare for Ahriman's appearance on earth. A great many of the exponents of the so-called creeds of today are working intensively for Ahriman; they leave unnoticed the truth: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the Earth-age," when they declare heretical all that proceeds from the immediate vision of the Christ today. They leave this truth unnoticed because it is more comfortable to take the Gospels in a literal way only, that is, to hold to what *they* deem to be the literal interpretation of the Gospels.

Mankind must be protected by wisdom from regarding the Gospels in this way, for the four Gospels, as regards external physical understanding, do contradict one another. He who does not press forward today to a spiritual interpretation of the Gospels, spreads abroad an untruthful interpretation of these Gospels, for he deceives men as regards the external contradictions which are to be found in the four Gospels. He who deceives man regarding the things that concern him most vitally, best furthers the progress of Ahriman.

**Stuttgart, 25 Dec 1919.**

### **GA 195 – Stuttgart, 28 Dec 1919.**

Looking back over the evolution of our earth we find, preceding our modern materialistic civilization, the Greco-Latin, which goes back to the eighth pre-Christian century. We see, about two hundred years after the beginning of this Greco-Latin time, something rising up, which we might describe as the old Life of Wisdom of earlier times percolating through the land of Greece. Nietzsche felt this to a remarkable degree, even if pathologically. From the beginning of his spiritual activity he felt himself an opponent of Socrates, and he was never

tired of speaking of the greater value of pre-Socratic Greek culture than of the post-Socratic. It is certainly true that with Socrates a great age came in for Mankind, an age which reached its climax in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But this age of Socrates has now run its course, has rightly come to an end. The Socratic age is that in which pure logic and pure dialectic arose from the earlier instinctive Wisdom. The rising of pure logic, of pure dialectic, out of the ancient clairvoyant Wisdom is the chief characteristic of our Western culture. This logic, this dialectic, has also impressed its stamp upon Christianity, for the theology of the West is a dialectic theology. But what rises in Greece as dialectics, as thought reduced to abstraction, goes back to the Mysteries of the East. Among these Mysteries were those which founded that civilization which later became the Chinese. Within the early Chinese civilization Lucifer was incarnated in human form. We must not conceal the fact from ourselves that Lucifer once lived in a physical body, as Christ during the time of the Mystery of Golgotha walked on earth in a physical body. But it is only a narrow-minded misunderstanding of the Luciferic incarnation if we look upon everything that has come through Lucifer as "Touch-me-not". From Lucifer, for instance, has arisen the greatness of Greek culture itself, that unique ancient art, the artistic impulse of mankind, as we ourselves still look upon it. But in Europe all this has hardened into mere words, empty of content. It was through Luciferic wisdom that Christianity was first grasped in Europe. The important point is that in the Greek wisdom which developed as Gnosis in order to comprehend the Mystery of Golgotha, the old Luciferic Wisdom had cooperated, had given the old Gnosis its form. The fact that the Mystery of Golgotha had clothed itself in what Lucifer had given to the evolution of the earth, was the greatest victory for Christianity at that time. But when this Luciferic culture, to which, through the incarnation of Lucifer man was given over, was ebbing away, there flowed in gradually, that which was preparing for the coming incarnation of Ahriman in the Western World. When the time is ripe — and it is preparing itself — Ahriman will incarnate in a human body in the Western World. This fact must take place just as the others have taken place — *viz.* that Lucifer has incarnated and that Christ has incarnated. This fact is predetermined in the evolution of the earth. The all-important fact is simply this: to keep the fact in mind, that we shall rightly prepare ourselves for it, for Ahriman will not begin to work only when he has incarnated in a human body; he is now preparing his appearance from the super-sensible world. He is already working from thence into the evolution of mankind. From that side he is seeking his tools through which he prepares for what must come.

Now, it is essential for the favourable working of that which Ahriman will bring to humanity — he will bring advantageous gifts just as Lucifer did — that man shall take the right attitude. The all-important thing is that man shall not through sleeping miss the coming of Ahriman. When the incarnation of Ahriman takes place in the Western World we shall simply see inscribed in the local Register, the birth of John William Smith (of course, this will not be the name) and people will look upon the child as a citizen in comfortable circumstances like any other, and they will sleep through what has in reality taken place. Our University professors will certainly not trouble whether man sleeps through it or not. For

them what has taken place will be merely the birth of J. W. Smith. But in the Ahrimanic age it is all-important that men should know that they have here to do only externally with J. W. Smith, that inwardly Ahriman is present, and that they must not deceive themselves through sleepy illusion about what has happened. Even now we may not yield to any deception. These things are in preparation. *Among the most important means which Ahriman has to work with from the other side, is the furthering of abstract thinking in Man.* And because men cling so firmly today to this abstract thinking, they are working in the way most favourable for the coming of Ahriman. You must realize that there is no better way to prepare for the fact that Ahriman is endeavouring cunningly to capture the whole Earth for his evolution, than that man should continue to live an abstract life, steeping himself in abstractions, as he does in the social life of today. This is one of the ruses, one of the clever tricks, by which Ahriman prepares in his own way for his lordship over the earth. Instead of showing men today out of conclusive experience, what has to happen, leaders offer them theories on every subject, including the social question. To those who give out these theories, knowledge gained by means of experience is abstract, because they have no inkling of what real Life is. All this is preparation from the Ahrimanic point of view.

But there is also another form of preparation for Ahriman which can happen through an erroneous view of the Gospels. This, too, is something that must be made known at the present day. You know quite well that today there are very many men, especially among the official representatives of this or that form of religious confession, who are fighting to the uttermost against that new Christ knowledge which is arising among us out of the Science of Initiation. Such men, if they do not swear allegiance to mere Rationalism, accept the Gospels; but what do these men really know of the true nature of the Gospels? These are the men who, during the nineteenth century, have applied to the Gospels the historical-scientific method of the outer world. What has come from the Gospels through the scientific method of last century? Nothing else, except that the conception of the Gospels has gradually become completely materialized. Our attention was first drawn to the contradictions in the four Gospels. Then from the recognition of these contradictions came the slide downwards. Finally, what is the outcome of this Gospel investigation? What else is it but, I might say, lifting the Gospels off their hinges? What does such an investigator as the theologian, Professor Schmiedel of Basle, seek in the Gospels? He seeks to prove that they are not simply products of fantasy brought forward only to glorify Christ Jesus. And so there follow a limited number of now-famous points unfavourable to the Christ. These, he maintains, would have been omitted if the Gospels had only been written for the glorification of Jesus. We are, therefore, left with the feeling that he admits all the objections that are brought against Christ Jesus, so as finally to save for the Gospels a little label of this world's Science. Even this little label will give way. Man will gain nothing from this worldly Science. He will gain nothing as regards the genuineness of the Gospels from the way these people point it out. To have the right relation towards these Gospels we must know why they came into being, that is, we must know their real purpose. This knowledge can only be obtained through an understanding fructified by Spiritual Science.



If we sink ourselves in the Gospels, if we absorb their content and force, then we gain from them a soul-content. No outer historical science will explain the riddle of the Gospels; but we can sink ourselves in the Gospels, and then we receive a soul-content. This soul-content, however, is a great hallucination — certainly a most spiritualized hallucination, the hallucination of the Mystery of Golgotha. The highest that is to be gained from the Gospels is the hallucination of the Mystery of Golgotha, neither more nor less. Now, it is just this secret which is known to the more modern Catholic Church. For this reason the Gospels are not allowed to be studied by the laity, for it is feared that men will discover that they cannot have through the Gospels historical knowledge of the Christ Mystery, but only a hallucination of this Mystery of Golgotha. I might also say, an Imagination; for the hallucination is so spiritualized that it is an actual Imagination. But more than an Imagination is not to be gained from the content of the Gospels in themselves.

What is the path from Imagination to Reality? The path will be opened up through Spiritual Science, not through that which is outside Spiritual Science, but through Spiritual Science alone. That means that the Imagination of the Gospels shall be raised to Reality through Spiritual Science. It is of the most extreme importance to Ahriman so to prepare his incarnation that through Spiritual Science man shall not follow this path of Imagination in the Gospels on to the Reality of the Mystery of Golgotha. Just as it is in the greatest interest of Ahriman that man should keep up the love of abstraction, so it is in his greatest interest that man should cherish more and more a form of piety built upon the mere Gospels. When you think over this, you will realize that a great part of the creeds existing today is the preparatory work of Ahriman for his purposes in this earth existence. In what way could one serve Ahriman better than by resolving to make use of an external power commanding those who believe in, and submit themselves to this power, not to read any anthroposophical literature? No greater service could be done to Ahriman than to make sure that a great number of people do not read anthroposophical literature. I have already mentioned in these lectures who the people are that have resolved upon this course. The only way to present certain facts today is to place them unreservedly in the light of truth. It must be realized today that the progress of the World has a certain relationship to cosmic periods, limited through the Luciferic incarnation, which in time and space, lies before the Mystery of Golgotha. But in the way of this progress the incarnation of Ahriman in the West places itself, so that the forces in opposition are strengthened. The incarnation of Ahriman, in a future not very far distant, can be helped on its way just as well by an obscured worship of the Gospels as by abstract thinking.

**Stuttgart, 28 Dec 1919.**

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