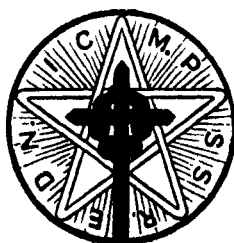


AN OUTLINE OF
Occult Science

By

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PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

ONE who undertakes to represent certain results of scientific spiritual research of the kind recorded in this book, must above all things be prepared to find that this kind of investigation is at the present time almost universally regarded as impossible. For things are related in the following pages about which those who are to-day esteemed exact thinkers assert that "they will probably remain altogether indeterminate by human intelligence." One who knows and can respect the reasons which prompt many a serious person to assert this impossibility, would fain make the attempt again and again to show what misunderstandings are really at the bottom of the belief that it is not given to human knowledge to penetrate into the superphysical worlds.

For two things present themselves for consideration. First, no human being will, on deeper reflection, be able in the long run to shut his eyes to the fact that his most important questions as to the meaning and significance of life must remain unanswered, if there be no access to higher worlds. Theoretically we may delude ourselves about this fact and so get away from it; the depths of the soul-life, however, will not tolerate such self-delusion. The person who will not listen to what

comes from these depths of the soul will naturally reject any account of supersensible worlds. There are however people—and their number is not small—who find it impossible to remain deaf to the demands coming from the depths of the soul. They must always be knocking at the gates which, in the opinion of others, bar the way to what is “incomprehensible.”

Secondly, the statements of “exact thinkers” are on no account to be despised. Where they have to be taken seriously, one who occupies himself with them will thoroughly feel and appreciate this seriousness. The writer of this book would not like to be taken for one who lightly disregards the enormous thought-labour which has been expended on determining the limits of the human intellect. This thought-labour cannot be put aside with a few phrases about “academic wisdom” and the like. In many cases it has its source in true striving after knowledge and in genuine discernment. Indeed, even more than this must be admitted; reasons have been brought forward to show that the knowledge which is to-day regarded as scientific cannot penetrate into supersensible worlds, and these reasons *are in a certain sense irrefutable.*

Now it may appear strange to many people that the writer of this book admits this freely, and yet undertakes to make statements about supersensible worlds. It seems indeed almost

impossible that a person should admit *in a certain sense* the reasons why knowledge of superphysical worlds is unattainable, and should yet speak about those worlds.

And yet it is possible to take this attitude, and at the same time to understand that it impresses others as being inconsistent. It is not given to every one to enter into the experiences we pass through when we approach supersensible realms with the human intellect. Then it turns out that intellectual proofs may certainly be irrefutable, and that *notwithstanding this*, they need not be decisive with regard to reality. Instead of all sorts of theoretical explanations, let us now try to make this comprehensible by a comparison. That comparisons are not in themselves proofs is readily admitted, but this does not prevent their often making intelligible what has to be expressed.

Human understanding, as it works in everyday life and in ordinary science, is actually so constituted that it cannot penetrate into superphysical worlds. This may be proved beyond the possibility of denial. Only this proof can have no more value as regards a certain kind of soul-life than the one attempting to show that man's natural eye cannot with its visual faculty penetrate to the smallest cells of a living being, or to the constitution of far-off celestial bodies.

Just as the assertion is true and demonstrable

that the ordinary power of seeing does not penetrate as far as the cells, so is the other assertion which maintains that ordinary knowledge cannot penetrate into supersensible worlds. And yet the proof that the ordinary power of vision has to stop short of the cells in no way excludes the investigation of cells. Why should the proof that the ordinary power of cognition has to stop short of supersensible worlds, decide anything against the possibility of investigating those worlds?

One can be sensible of the feeling which this comparison may evoke in many people. One can even enter into the feelings of others who doubt if one who confronts the thought-labour mentioned above with such a comparison, has any idea whatever of the full seriousness of that labour. And yet the present writer is not only fully convinced of that seriousness, but is of opinion that that work of thought may be numbered among the noblest achievements of humanity. To show that the human power of vision cannot reach the cells without the help of instruments, would surely be a useless undertaking; but in exact thinking, to become conscious of the nature of that thought is a necessary work of the mind. That one who devotes himself to such work does not notice that reality may refute him, is only too natural. The preface to this book can be no place for entering into many

refutations of the former editions, put forth by people who are entirely devoid of appreciation of what it strives after, or who direct their unfounded attacks against the personality of the author; but it must none the less be emphasized that depreciation in this book of serious scientific thought can be imputed to the author only by one who wishes to shut himself off from the *spirit* of what is expressed in it.

Man's power of cognition may be augmented and made more powerful, just as the eye's power of vision may be augmented. Only the means for strengthening the capacity of cognition are entirely of a spiritual nature; they are inner processes, belonging wholly to the soul. They consist of what is described in this book as meditation and concentration (contemplation). Ordinary soul-life is bound up with the bodily organs; the strengthened soul-life liberates itself from these. There are schools of thought at the present time to which this assertion must appear quite senseless, to which it must seem based only on self-delusion. Those who think in this way will find it easy, from their point of view, to prove that "all soul-life" is bound up with the nervous system. One who occupies the standpoint from which this book has been written can thoroughly understand such proofs. He understands people who say that only superficiality can assert that there may be some kind of soul-life independent of the body; and

who are quite convinced that in such experiences of the soul there exists a connection with the life of the nervous system, which the "dilettantism of occult science" merely fails to detect.

Here certain quite comprehensible habits of thought are in such sharp contradiction to what has been described in this book, that there is as yet no prospect of coming to an understanding with many people. It is here that we come to the point where the wish must assert itself that it should no longer be a characteristic of mental culture in our time at once to decry as fanciful or visionary a method of research which abruptly deviates from its own. But on the other hand it is also a fact at the present time that a number of people can appreciate the supersensible method of research, as it is represented in this book: people who understand that the meaning of life is not revealed in general phrases about the soul, self, and so on, but can only result from really entering into the facts of superphysical research.

Not from lack of modesty, but with a sense of joyful satisfaction, does the author of this book keenly feel the necessity for this fourth edition after a comparatively short time. He is prevented from immodestly emphasizing this by the feeling that even this new edition falls far short of what it should really be as an outline of a supersensible conception of the world. The whole

book has once more been revised for the new edition, much supplementary matter has been inserted at important points, and elucidations have been attempted. But in numerous passages the author has realized how poor the means of representation accessible to him prove to be in comparison with what superphysical research discovers. Thus it was scarcely possible to do more than point out the way in which to reach conceptions of the events described in this book as the Saturn, Sun, and Moon evolutions. An important aspect of this subject has been briefly remodelled in this edition. But experiences in relation to such things diverge so widely from all experiences in the realm of sense, that their representation necessitates a continual striving after expressions which may be, at least in some measure, adequate. One who is willing to enter into the attempt at representation which has here been made, will perhaps notice that in the case of many things which cannot possibly be expressed by mere words, the endeavour has been made to convey them by the *manner* of the description. This manner is, for instance, different in the account of the Saturn evolution from that used for the Sun evolution, and so on.

Much complementary and additional matter has been inserted in this edition in the part which deals with "Perception of the Higher Worlds." The endeavour has been made to represent in a

graphic way the kind of inner soul-processes by which the power of cognition liberates itself from the limits which confine it in the world of sense and qualifies itself for experiencing the supersensible world. The attempt has been made to show that these experiences, though gained by entirely inner ways and methods, have yet a not merely subjective significance for the individual person who gains them. The description attempts to show that *within* the soul its separateness and personal peculiarities are stripped away, and that it attains to experiences which *every* human being has in the same way, who rightly works out his development from his subjective experiences. It is only when "knowledge of supersensible worlds" is thought of as bearing this character that it may be differentiated from old experiences of merely subjective mysticism. Of this mysticism it may be said that it is after all more or less a subjective concern of the mystic. The scientific spiritual training of the soul, however, as it is described here, strives after objective experiences, the truth of which, although recognized in an entirely inward way, may yet, for that very reason, be found to be universally valid. This again is a point on which it is very difficult to come to an understanding with many of the habits of thought of our time.

In conclusion, the author would like to observe that it would be well if even the sympathetic

reader of the book would take its statements exactly as they stand. At the present time there is a very prevalent tendency to give this or that spiritual movement an historical name, and to many it is only such a name that seems to make it valuable. But, it may be asked, what would the statements in this book gain by being denominated "Rosicrucian," or anything else of the kind? What is of importance is that in this book a glance into supersensible worlds is attempted with the means which in our present period of evolution are possible and suitable for the human soul; and that from this point of view the problems of human destiny and human existence are considered beyond the limits of birth and death. The question is not to find a name, but to find truth.

On the other hand, designations have also been used, with hostile intention, for the conception of the universe represented in this book. Leaving out of account that those which were intended to strike and discredit the author most heavily are absurd and objectively untrue, these designations are stamped as unworthy by the fact that they disparage a fully *independent* search for truth; because the aggressors do not judge it on its own merits, but try to impose on others, as a judgment of these investigations, erroneous ideas as to their dependence on this or that tradition,—ideas which they have invented, or adopted from others

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without reason. However necessary these words are in face of the many attacks on the author, it is yet repugnant to him in this place to enter further into the matter.

RUDOLF STEINER

June, 1913.

AN OUTLINE OF OCCULT SCIENCE

CHAPTER I

THE CHARACTER OF OCCULT SCIENCE

AT the present time the words "occult science" are apt to arouse the most divergent feelings. Upon some people they work like a magic charm, like the announcement of something to which they feel attracted by the innermost powers of their soul; to others there is in the words something repellent, calling forth contempt, derision, or a compassionate smile. By many, occult science is looked upon as a lofty goal of human effort, the crown of all other knowledge and cognition; others, who are devoting themselves with the greatest earnestness and noble love of truth to that which appears to them true science, deem occult science mere idle dreaming and fantasy, in the same category with what is called superstition. To some, occult science is like a light without which life would be valueless; to others, it represents a spiritual danger, calculated to lead astray immature minds and weak souls, while between these two extremes is to be found every possible intermediate shade of opinion.

Strange feelings are awakened in one who has attained a certain impartiality of judgment in

regard to occult science, its adherents and its opponents, when he sees how people, undoubtedly possessed of a genuine feeling for freedom in many matters, become intolerant when they meet with this particular line of thought. And an unprejudiced observer will scarcely fail in this case to admit that what attracts many adherents of occult science—or occultism—is nothing but the fatal craving for what is unknown and mysterious, or even vague. And he will also be ready to own that there is much cogency in the reasons put forward against what is fantastic and visionary by serious opponents of the cause in question. In fact, one who studies occult science will do well not to lose sight of the fact that the impulse toward the mysterious leads many people on a vain chase after worthless and dangerous will-o'-the-wisps.

Even though the occult scientist keeps a watchful eye on all errors and vagaries on the part of adherents of his views, and on all justifiable antagonism, there are yet reasons which hold him back from the immediate defence of his own efforts and aspirations. These reasons will become apparent to any one entering more deeply into occult science. It would therefore be superfluous to discuss them here. If they were cited before the threshold of this science had been crossed, they would not suffice to convince one who, held back by irresistible repugnance, refuses to cross that threshold. But to one who effects

an entry, the reasons will soon manifest themselves from within, with unmistakable clearness. This much, however, implies that the reasons in question point to a certain attitude as the only right one for an occult scientist. He avoids, as much as he possibly can, any kind of outward defence or conflict, and lets the cause speak for itself. He simply puts forward occult science; and in what it has to say about various matters he shows how his knowledge is related to other departments of life and science, what antagonism it may encounter, and in what way reality witnesses to the truth of his cognitions. He knows that an attempted vindication would, not merely on account of current defective thinking but by virtue of a certain inner necessity, lead into the domain of artful persuasion; and he desires nothing else than to let occult science work its own way quite independently.

The first point in occult science is by no means the advancing of assertions or opinions which are to be proved, but the communication, in a purely narrative form, of experiences which are to be met with in a world other than the one that is to be seen with physical eyes and touched with physical hands. And further, it is an important point that through this science the methods are described by which man may verify for himself the truth of such communications. For one who makes a serious study of genuine occult science

will soon find that thereby much becomes changed in the conceptions and ideas which are formed—and rightly formed—in other spheres of life. A wholly new conception necessarily arises also about what has hitherto been called a “proof.” We come to see that in certain domains such a word loses its usual meaning, and that there are other grounds for insight and understanding than “proofs” of this kind.

All occult science is born from two thoughts, which may take root in any human being. To the occult scientist these thoughts express facts which may be experienced if the right methods for the purpose are used. But to many people these same thoughts represent highly disputable assertions, which may arouse fierce contention, even if they are not regarded as something which may be “proved” impossible.

These two thoughts are, first, that behind the visible world there is another, the world invisible, which is hidden from the senses and from thought that is fettered by those senses; and secondly, that it is possible for man to penetrate into that unseen world by developing certain faculties dormant within him.

Some will say that there is no such hidden world. The world perceived by man through his senses is the only one. Its enigmas can be solved out of itself. Even if man is still very far from being able to answer all the questions of

existence, the time will certainly come when sense-experience and the science based upon it will be able to give the answers to all such questions.

Others say that it cannot be asserted that there is no unscen world behind the visible one, but that human powers of perception are not able to penetrate into that world. Those powers have bounds which they cannot pass. Faith, with its urgent cravings, may take refuge in such a world; but true science, based on ascertained facts, can have nothing to do with it.

A third section looks upon it as a kind of presumption for man to attempt to penetrate, by his own cognitive efforts, into a domain with regard to which he should give up all claim to knowledge and be content with faith. The adherents of this view feel it to be wrong for weak human beings to wish to force their way into a world which can belong only to religious life.

• It is also alleged that a common knowledge of the facts of the sense-world is possible for mankind, but that in regard to supersensible things it can be merely a question of the individual's personal opinion, and that in these matters there can be no possibility of a certainty universally recognized. And many other assertions are made on the subject.

The occult scientist has convinced himself that a survey of the visible world propounds enigmas to man which can never be solved out of the facts of that world itself. Their solution

in this way will never be possible, however far knowledge of those facts may advance. For visible facts plainly point, through their own inner nature, to the existence of a hidden world. One who does not see this closes his eyes to the problems which obviously spring up everywhere out of the facts of the sense-world. He refuses to see certain problems and enigmas, and therefore thinks that all questions can be answered through facts pertaining to the senses. The questions which he is willing to ask are all capable of being answered by the facts which he is convinced will be discovered in the course of time. Every genuine occultist admits this. But why should one who asks no questions expect answers on certain subjects? The occult scientist says nothing else than that to him such questioning is natural, and must be regarded as a wholly justifiable expression of the human soul. Science is surely not to be confined within limits which prohibit impartial inquiry.

The opinion that there are bounds to human knowledge which it is impossible to pass, compelling man to stop short of the world invisible, is thus met by the occult scientist: he says that there can exist no manner of doubt that it is impossible to penetrate into the unseen world by means of the kind of cognition here meant. One who considers it the only kind can come to no other opinion than that man is not permitted

to penetrate into a possibly existing higher world. But the occult scientist goes on to say that it is possible to develop a different sort of cognition, and that this leads into the unseen world. If this kind of cognition is held to be impossible, we arrive at a point of view from which any mention of an invisible world appears as sheer nonsense. But to an unbiassed judgment there can be no basis for such an opinion as this, except that its adherent is a stranger to that other kind of cognition. But how can a person form an opinion about a subject of which he declares himself ignorant? Occult science must in this case maintain the principle that people should speak only of what they know, and should not make assertions about anything of which they are ignorant. It can only recognize every man's right to communicate his own experiences, not every man's right to declare the impossibility of what he does not, or will not, know. The occult scientist disputes no one's right to ignore the invisible world; but there can be no real reason why a person should declare himself an authority not only on what he may know but also on things considered unknowable.

To those who say that it is presumption to penetrate into unseen regions, the occult scientist would merely point out that this *can* be done, and that it is sinning against the faculties with which man has been endowed if he allows them

to waste instead of developing and using them.

But he who thinks that views about the unseen world are necessarily wholly dependent on personal opinion and feeling is denying the common base of all human beings. Even though it is true that every one must find light on these things within himself, it is also a fact that all those who go far enough arrive at the same, not at different, conclusions regarding them. Differences exist only so long as people will not approach the highest truths by the well-tested path of occult science, but attempt ways of their own choosing. Genuine occult science will certainly fully admit that only one who has followed, or at any rate has begun to follow, the path of occult science is in a position to recognize it as the right one. But all those who follow that path will recognize its rightness, and have ever done so.

The path to occult knowledge will be found, at the fitting moment, by every human being who discerns in what is visible the presence of something unseen, or who even but dimly surmises or divines it; and who, from his consciousness that powers of cognition are capable of development, is driven to the feeling that what is hidden may be unveiled to him. One who is drawn to occult science by such experiences of the soul will find opening up before him not only the prospect of finding the answers to certain questions which press upon him, but the further

prospect of overcoming everything which hampers and enfeebles his life. And in a certain higher sense it implies a weakening of life, in fact a death of the soul, when a person is compelled to turn away from, or to deny, the unseen. Indeed, under certain circumstances despair is the result of a man's losing all hope of having the invisible revealed to him. This death and despair, in their manifold forms, are at the same time inner spiritual foes of occult science. They make their appearance when a person's inner force is dwindling away. In that case, if he is to possess any vital force it must be supplied to him from without. He perceives the things, beings, and events which approach his organs of sense, and analyzes them with his intellect. They afford him pleasure and pain, and impel him to the actions of which he is capable. For a while he may go on in this way: but at length he must reach a point at which he inwardly dies. For that which may thus be extracted for man from the outer world, becomes exhausted. This is not a statement arising from the personal experience of one individual, but something resulting from an impartial survey of the whole of human life. That which secures life from exhaustion lies in the unseen world, deep at the roots of things. If a person loses the power of descending into those depths, so that he cannot be perpetually drawing fresh vitality from them, in the end the outer world

of things also ceases to yield him anything of a vivifying nature.

It is by no means the case that only the individual and his personal weal and woe are concerned. Through occult science man gains the conviction that from a higher standpoint the weal and woe of the individual are intimately bound up with the weal or woe of the whole world. This is a means by which man comes to see that he is inflicting an injury on the whole world and every being within it if he does not develop his own powers in the right way. If a man makes his life desolate by losing touch with the unseen, he not only destroys in his inner self something, the decay of which may eventually drive him to despair, but through his weakness he constitutes a hindrance to the evolution of the whole world in which he lives.

Now man may delude himself. He may yield to the belief that there is nothing invisible, and that that which is manifest to his senses and intellect contains everything which can possibly exist. But such an illusion is only possible on the surface of consciousness and not in its depths. Feeling and desire do not yield to this delusive belief. They will be perpetually craving, in one way or another, for that which is invisible. And if this is withheld, they drive man into doubt, into uncertainty about life, or even into despair. Occult science, by making manifest what is unseen,

is calculated to overcome all hopelessness, uncertainty, and despair,—everything, in short, which weakens life and makes it unfit for its necessary service in the universe.

The beneficent effect of occult science is that it not only satisfies man's thirst for knowledge but gives strength and stability to life. The source whence the occult scientist draws his power for work and his confidence in life is inexhaustible. Any one who has once had recourse to that fount will always, on revisiting it, go forth with renewed vigour.

There are people who will not hear anything about occult science, because they think they discern something unhealthful in what has just been said. These people are quite right as regards the surface and outer aspect of life. They do not desire that to be stunted which life in its so-called reality offers. They see weakness in man's turning away from reality and seeking his welfare in an unseen world which to them is synonymous with what is chimerical and visionary. If as occult scientists we do not desire to fall into morbid dreaming and weakness, we must admit that such objections are partially justified. For they are founded upon sound judgment, which leads to a half truth instead of a whole truth merely because it does not penetrate to the roots of things, but remains on the surface. If occult science were calculated to weaken life and estrange

man from true reality, such objections would certainly be strong enough to cut the ground from under the feet of those who follow this spiritual line of life. But even in regard to such opinions as these, occult science would not be taking the right course in defending itself in the ordinary sense of the words. Even in this case it can only speak by means of what it gives to those who really penetrate into its meaning, that is, by the real force and vitality which it bestows. It does not weaken life, but strengthens it, because it equips man not only with the forces of the manifest world but with those of the invisible world of which the manifest is the effect. Thus it does not imply an impoverishment, but an enrichment, of life. The true occult scientist does not stand aloof from the world, but is a lover of reality, because he does not desire to enjoy the unseen in a remote dream-world, but finds his happiness in bringing the world ever fresh supplies of force from the invisible sources whence this very world is derived, and from which it must be continually drawing fertilizing power.

Some people find many obstacles on the path of occult science, when they enter upon it. One of these is expressed in the fact that a person, attempting to take the first steps, is sometimes discouraged because at the outset he is introduced to the details of the supersensible world, in order that he may, with entire patience and devotion,

become acquainted with them. A series of communications is made to him about the invisible nature of man, about certain definite occurrences in the kingdom of which death opens the portals, and about the evolution of man, the earth, and the entire solar system. What he expected was to enter the supersensible world easily, at a bound. Now he is heard to say: "Everything which I am told to study is food for my mind, but leaves my soul cold. I am seeking the deepening of my soul-life. I want to find myself within. I am seeking something that will lift my soul into the sphere of the divine, leading it to its true home; I do not want information about human nature and world-processes." People who talk in this way have no idea that by such feelings they are barring the door against what they are really seeking. For it is just when, with a free and open mind, in self-surrender and patience, they assimilate what they call "merely" food for the intellect, it is then and then only that they will find that for which their souls are athirst. That road leads the soul to union with the divine, which brings the soul knowledge of the works of the divine. The uplifting of the heart is the result of learning to know about the creations of the spirit.

On this account occult science must begin by imparting the information which throws light on the realms of the spiritual world. So too in

this book we shall begin with what can be unveiled from unseen worlds through the methods of occult research. That which is mortal in man, and that which is immortal, will be described in their connection with the world of which he is a member.

Then will follow a description of the methods by which man is able to develop those powers of cognition latent within him, which will lead him into that world. As much will be said about the methods as is at present possible in a work of this kind. It seems natural to think that these methods should be dealt with first. For it seems as though the main point would be to acquaint man with what may bring him, by means of his own powers, to the desired view of the higher world. Many may say, "Of what use is it for me that others tell me what they know about higher worlds? I wish to see them for myself."

The fact of the matter is that for really fruitful experience of the mysteries of the unseen world, previous knowledge of certain facts belonging to that world is absolutely necessary. Why this is so will sufficiently appear from what follows.

It is a mistake to think that the truths of occult science which are imparted by those qualified to do so, before they speak about the methods for penetrating into the spiritual world itself, can be understood and grasped only by means of the higher vision which results from developing certain powers latent in man. This is not the case.

For investigating and discovering the mysteries of a supersensible world, that higher sight is essential. No one is able to discover the facts of the unseen world without the clairvoyance which is synonymous with that higher vision. But if when discovered they are related, every one who applies to them the full range of his ordinary intellect and unprejudiced powers of judgment will be able to understand them and to rise to a high degree of conviction concerning them. One who maintains that the mysteries are incomprehensible to him, does not do so because he is not yet clairvoyant, but because he has not yet succeeded in bringing into activity those powers of cognition which may be possessed by every one, even without clairvoyance.

A new method of putting forward these matters consists in so describing them, after they have been clairvoyantly investigated, that they are quite accessible to the faculty of judgment. If only people do not shut themselves off by prejudice, there is no obstacle to arriving at a conviction, even without higher vision. It is true that many will find that the new method of presentation, as given in this book, is far from corresponding to their customary ways of forming an opinion. But any objection due to this will soon disappear if one takes the trouble to follow out his customary methods to their final consequences.

When, by an extended application of ordinary

thought, a certain number of the higher mysteries have been assimilated and found intelligible, by any one, then the right moment has come for the methods of occult research to be applied to his individual personality: these will give him access to the unseen world.

Nor will any genuine scientist be able to find contradiction, in spirit and true reality, between his science, which is built upon the facts of the sense-world, and the way in which occult science carries on its researches. The scientist uses certain instruments and methods. He constructs his instruments by working upon what "nature" gives him. Occult science also uses an instrument, but in this case the instrument is man himself. And that instrument too must first be prepared for that higher research. The faculties and powers given to man by nature at the outset, without his coöperation, must be transformed into higher ones. In this way man is able to make himself into an instrument for the investigation of the unseen world.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF MAN

CONSIDERING man in the light of occult science, we are at once reminded of its general characteristics. It rests upon the recognition of a hidden something behind that which is manifest to the outer senses and to the intellect brought to bear upon their perceptions. These senses and this intellect can apprehend only a part of all that which occult science unveils as the total human entity, and this part is what occult science calls the physical body. In order to throw light on its conception of this body, occult science at first directs attention to a phenomenon which confronts all observers of life like a great riddle,— the phenomenon of death,— and in connection with it occult science points to so-called inanimate nature, the mineral kingdom. We are thus referred to facts which it devolves on occult science to explain, and to which an important part of this work must be devoted. But to begin with, only a few points will be touched upon, by way of giving an idea of the bearings of the subject.

Within manifested nature the physical body, according to occult science, is that part of man which is of the same nature as the mineral kingdom.

On the other hand, that which distinguishes man from minerals is considered as not being part of the physical body. From the occult point of view, what is of supreme importance is the fact that death separates from the human being that which, during life, is of like nature with the mineral world. Occult science points to the dead body as that part of man which is found existing in the same way in the mineral kingdom. It lays strong emphasis on the fact that in that principle of human nature which it looks upon as the physical body, and which death reduces to a corpse, the same materials and forces are at work as in the mineral realm; but no less emphasis is laid on the fact that at death disintegration of the physical body sets in. Occult science therefore says: "It is true that the same materials and forces are at work in the physical body as in the mineral, but during life their activity is placed at the disposal of something higher. They are left to themselves only when death occurs. Then they act, as in conformity with their own nature they must, as decomposers of the physical body."

Thus a sharp distinction must be drawn between the manifested and the hidden elements in man. For during life, that which is hidden from view has to wage perpetual war on the materials and forces of the mineral world. This indicates the point at which occult science steps in. It has to characterize that which wages the war alluded

to,—a principle which is hidden from sense-observation. Clairvoyant sight alone can reveal its workings. How man arrives at becoming aware of this hidden element as plainly as his ordinary eyes see the phenomena of sense, will be described in a later part of this book. Results of clairvoyant observation will be given now for the reason already pointed out in the preceding pages, that is, that communications about the way in which the higher sight is obtained can only be of value to the student when he has first become acquainted, in the form of a narrative, with the results of clairvoyant research. For in this sphere it is quite possible to understand things which one is not yet able to observe. Indeed, the right path to higher vision starts with understanding.

Now although the hidden something which wages war on the disintegration of the physical body can be observed only by the higher sight, it is plainly visible in its effects to the human faculty of judgment which is limited to the manifested world; and these effects are expressed in the form or shape in which mineral materials and forces are combined during life. When death has intervened, the form disappears little by little, and the physical body becomes part of the rest of the mineral world. But the clairvoyant is able to observe, as an independent principle of human nature, that which, while life lasts, prevents the physical materials and forces from pursuing their natural

course; which would lead to the dissolution of the physical body. He calls this independent principle the etheric or vital body. • •

If misunderstandings are not to arise at the outset, two things must be borne in mind in connection with this account of a second principle of human nature. The word "etheric" is used here in a different sense from that of modern physics, which designates as "ether" the medium by which light is transmitted. In occult science the use of the word is limited to the sense given above. It denotes that which is accessible to higher sight, and can be known to physical observation only by its effects, that is, by its power of giving a definite form or shape to the mineral materials and forces present in the physical body. Again, the use of the word "body" must not be misunderstood. It is necessary to use the words of everyday language in describing things on a higher plane of existence, and these terms, when applied to sense-observation, express only what is physical. The etheric body has, of course, nothing of a bodily nature in the physical sense, however ethereal we might imagine such a body to be.

Directly the occultist comes to the mention of this etheric or vital body, he reaches the point at which he is bound to encounter the opposition of many contemporary opinions. The development of the human mind has been such that the mention of such a principle of human nature is necessarily

looked upon as unscientific. The materialistic way of thinking has arrived at the conclusion that there is nothing to be seen in a living body but a combination of physical substances and forces such as are also found in the so-called inanimate body of the mineral, the only difference being that they are more complicated in the living than in the lifeless body. Yet it is not very long since other views were held even by official science.

It is evident to any one who studies the works of many earnest men of science, produced during the first half of the nineteenth century, that at that time many a genuine investigator of nature was conscious of some factor acting within the living body other than in the lifeless mineral. It was termed "vital force." It is true this vital force is not represented as being what has been above characterized as the vital body, but underlying the conception was a dim idea of the existence of such a body. The vital force was generally regarded as something which in a living body was united with physical matter and forces in the same way as the force of a magnet unites itself with iron. Then came the time when vital force was banished from the domain of science. Mere physical and chemical causes were accounted all-sufficient.

At the present moment, however, there is a reaction in this respect in some scientific quarters. It is sometimes conceded that the hypothesis of

something of the nature of a "vital force" is not pure nonsense. Yet even the scientist who concedes this much is not willing to make common cause with the occultist with regard to the vital body. As a rule, it serves no useful purpose to enter upon a discussion of such views from the standpoint of occult science. It should be much more the concern of the occultist to recognize that the materialistic way of thinking is a necessary concomitant phenomenon of the great advance of natural science in our day. This advance is due to the vast improvements in the instruments used in sense-observation. And it is in the very nature of man to bring some of his faculties to a certain degree of perfection at the expense of others. Exact sense-observation, which has been evolved to such an important extent by natural science, was bound to leave in the background the cultivation of those human faculties which lead into the hidden worlds. But the time has come when this cultivation is once more necessary; and recognition of the invisible will not be won by combating opinions which are the logical outcome of a denial of its existence, but rather by setting the invisible in the right light. Then it will be recognized by those for whom the "time has come."

It was necessary to say this much, in order that it might not be assumed that occult science is ignorant of the standpoint of natural science when mention is made of an "etheric body," which in

many circles must necessarily be considered as purely imaginary.

The etheric body is thus the second principle of human nature. For the clairvoyant it possesses a higher degree of reality than the physical body. A description of how it is seen by the clairvoyant can be given only in a later part of this book, when the sense in which such descriptions are to be taken will become manifest. For the present it will be enough to say that the etheric body interpenetrates the physical body in all its parts, and is to be regarded as a kind of architect of the latter. All the physical organs are maintained in their form and shape by the currents and movements of the etheric body. The physical heart is based upon an etheric heart, the physical brain upon an etheric brain, and so on. The etheric body is organized exactly like the physical, with this difference, that in the etheric body the parts flow into one another in active movement, whereas in the physical body they are separated from each other.

Man has this etheric body in common with all plants, just as he has the physical body in common with minerals. Everything living has its etheric body.

The study of occult science proceeds upwards from the etheric body to another principle of human nature. To aid in the formation of an idea of this principle, it draws attention to the phenomenon of sleep, just as in connection with

the etheric body it drew attention to death. All human work, so far as the manifested world is concerned, is dependent on activity during waking life. But that activity is possible only so long as man is able to recuperate his exhausted forces by sleep. Action and thought disappear, pain and pleasure fade away during sleep, and on man's reawaking, his conscious powers ascend from the unconsciousness of sleep as though from hidden mysterious sources of energy. It is the same consciousness which sinks down into dim depths on falling asleep and ascends from them again on reawaking.

That which brings life up out of the state of unconsciousness is, according to occult science, the third principle of human nature. It is called the astral body. Just as the physical body cannot keep its form by means of the mineral substances and forces it contains, but must, in order to keep them together, be interpenetrated by the etheric body, so it is impossible for the forces of the etheric body of themselves to be irradiated with the light of consciousness. An etheric body left to its own resources would be in a permanent state of sleep.¹ An etheric body awake is irradiated by an astral body. The effect of this astral body seems to sense-observation to disappear when man falls asleep; to clairvoyant

¹We may also say, it could only live the life of a plant in the physical body.

observation it is still present, with the difference that it appears separated from or drawn out of the etheric body. • Sense-observation has nothing to do with the astral body itself, but only with its effects in the manifested world, and these cease to be visible during sleep. In the same sense in which man possesses his physical body in common with minerals and his etheric body in common with plants, he resembles animals as regards his astral body.

Plants are in a permanent state of sleep. One who does not judge accurately in these matters may easily make the mistake of attributing to plants the same kind of consciousness as that of animals and human beings in the waking state; but this assumption can only be due to an inaccurate conception of consciousness. In that case it is said that if an external stimulus is applied to a plant, it responds by certain movements, as would an animal. The sensitiveness of some plants is spoken of,---for example, of those which contract their leaves when certain external things act upon them. But the characteristic mark of consciousness is not that a being reacts in a certain way to an impression, but that it experiences something in its inner nature which adds a new element to mere reaction. Otherwise we should be able to speak of the "consciousness" of a piece of iron when it expands under the influence of heat. Consciousness is present only when, through the

effect of heat, the being feels pain or pleasure inwardly.

The fourth principle of being which occult science attributes to man is one which he does not share in common with the rest of the manifested world. It is that which differentiates him from his fellow-creatures, and makes him the crown of the creation which belongs to him. Occult science helps in forming a conception of this further principle of human nature by pointing out the existence of an essential difference between the kinds of experience in waking life. On the one hand, man is constantly subjected to experiences which must of necessity come and go; on the other, he has experiences with which this is not the case. This fact comes out with special force if human experiences are compared with those of animals. An animal experiences the influences of the outer world with great regularity; under the influence of heat and cold it becomes conscious of pain or pleasure, and during certain regularly recurring bodily processes it feels hunger and thirst. The sum total of man's life is not exhausted by such experiences; he is able to develop desires and wishes which go beyond these things. In the case of an animal it would always be possible, on going far enough into the matter, to ascertain the cause—either within or without its body—which impelled it to any given act or feeling. This is by no means the case with man. He may engender wishes and

desires for which no adequate cause exists either within or without his body. A particular source must be found for everything in this domain; and according to occult science this source is the human "I" or "ego." Therefore the ego is called the fourth principle of human nature.

Were the astral body left to its own resources, feelings of pleasure and pain, and sensations of hunger and thirst, would alternate within it, but there would be lacking the consciousness of a lasting quality in all these feelings. It is not the lasting element as such which is here designated the ego, but that which is conscious of the lasting element. In this domain, conceptions must be very exactly expressed if misunderstandings are not to arise. The becoming aware of that which is permanent, in exchange for that which is changeable, constitutes the first dawning of the feeling of the ego. The sensation of hunger, for instance, cannot give a creature the feeling of having an ego. Hunger sets in when the recurring causes make themselves felt in the being concerned, which then devours its food just because these recurring conditions are present. For the ego-consciousness to arise, there must not only be these recurring conditions, urging the being to take food, but there must have been pleasure derived from previous satisfaction of hunger, and the consciousness of the pleasure must have remained; so that not only the present experience

of hunger but the past experience of pleasure urges the being to take nourishment.

Just as the physical body falls into decay if the etheric body does not keep it together, and as the etheric body sinks into unconsciousness if not irradiated by the astral body, so would the astral body again and again allow the past to be lost in oblivion unless the ego rescued the past by calling it up into the present. What death is to the physical body and sleep to the etheric, the power of forgetting is to the astral body. We may put this in another way, and say that life is the special characteristic of the etheric body, consciousness that of the astral body, and memory that of the ego.

It is still easier to make the mistake of attributing memory¹ to an animal than that of attributing

¹ Explanations such as those given in this book regarding the faculty of memory may very easily be misunderstood. For one who observes external events only would not at first sight notice the difference between what happens in the animal, or even in the plant, when something appears in them resembling memory, and what is here characterized as actual recollection in man. Of course, when an animal has performed an action for a third or fourth time it may perform it in such a way that the outer process gives the impression that memory and the training associated with it are present. Nay, we may even extend our conception of memory or of recollection as far as do some naturalists and their disciples, when they say that the chicken begins to pick up grain as soon as it comes out of the shell; that it even knows the proper movements of head and body for gaining its end. It could not have learned this in the eggshell; hence it must have done so through the thousands and thousands of creatures from which it is descended (so says Hering, for example). We may call the phenomenon before us something resembling memory, but we shall never arrive at a real comprehension of human nature if we do not take into account that very distinctive element which shows itself in the human being as an inner process, as an actual perception of earlier experiences at a later date, not merely the working of earlier conditions in later ones. In this book it is this perception of what is past that is called memory, not alone

consciousness to a plant. It is so natural to think of memory when a dog recognizes its master, whom perhaps it has not seen for some time; yet in reality the recognition is not due to memory at all, but to something quite different. The dog feels a certain attraction toward its master which proceeds from the personality of the latter. This gives the dog a sense of pleasure whenever its master is present, and every time this happens it is a cause of the repetition of the pleasure. But memory only exists in a being when he not only feels his present experiences, but retains those of the past. A person might admit this, and yet fall into the error of thinking the dog has memory. For it might be said that the dog pines when its master leaves it, and therefore it retains a remembrance of him. This too is an inaccurate opinion. Living with its master has made his presence a condition of well-being to the dog, and it feels his absence much in the same way in which it feels hunger. One who does not make these distinctions will not arrive at a clear understanding of the true conditions of life.

Memory and forgetfulness have for the ego much the same significance that waking and sleeping the reappearance (even though transformed) of what once existed, in a later form. Were we to use the word memory for the corresponding processes in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, we should require to use a different word in speaking of man. In the description given here the important thing is not the particular word used, but rather that in attempting to understand human beings this distinction should be recognized. The apparently very intelligent actions of animals have just as little to do with what is here called memory.

have for the astral body. Just as sleep banishes into nothingness the cares and troubles of the day, so does forgetfulness draw a veil over the sad experiences of life and efface part of the past. And just as sleep is necessary for the recuperation of the exhausted vital forces, so must a man blot out from his memory certain portions of his past life if he is to face his new experiences freely and without prejudice. It is out of this very forgetfulness that strength arises for the perception of new facts. Let us take the case of learning to write. All the details which a child has to go through in this process are forgotten. What remains is the ability to write. How would a person ever be able to write if each time he took up his pen all his experiences in learning to write rose up before his mind?

Now there are many different degrees of memory. Its simplest form is when a person perceives an object and, after turning away from it, retains its image in his mind. He formed the image while looking at the object. A process was then carried out between his astral body and his ego. The astral body lifted into consciousness the outward impression of the object, but knowledge of the object would last only as long as the thing itself was present, unless the ego absorbed the knowledge into itself and made it its own.

It is at this point that occult science draws the dividing line between what belongs to the body and

what belongs to the soul. It speaks of the astral body as long as it is a question of the gaining of knowledge from an object which is present. But what gives knowledge duration is known as soul. From this it can at once be seen how close is the connection in man between the astral body and that part of the soul which gives a lasting quality to knowledge. The two are, to a certain extent, united into one principle of human nature. Consequently, this unity is often denoted the astral body. When exact terms are desired, the astral body is called the *soul-body*, and the soul, in so far as it is united with the latter, is called the *sentient soul*.

The ego rises to a higher stage of its being when it centres its activity on what it has gained for itself out of its knowledge of objective things. It is by means of this activity that the ego detaches itself more and more from the objects of perception, in order to work within that which is its own possession. The part of the soul on which this work devolves is called the rational or intellectual soul.¹ It is the peculiarity of the sentient and intellectual souls that they work with that which they receive through sense-impressions of outward

¹The term "verstandesseele" is sometimes translated by "rational soul." From a certain point of view one could prefer the term "intellectual soul," because it expresses better the activity of the soul than does "rational soul." In the latter one thinks of the knowledge about a perception; in intellectuality, of the actual possibility of forming this knowledge through inward activity. In German the expression "emotional soul" only coincides as it should with the second member of the soul when the inward activity is kept in view.

objects of which they retain the memory. The soul is then wholly surrendered to something which is really outside it. Even what it has made its own through memory, it has actually received from without. But it is able to go beyond all this, and occult science can most easily give an idea of this by drawing attention to a simple fact, which, however, is of the greatest importance. It is that in the whole range of speech there is but one name which is distinguished by its very nature from all other names. This is the name "I." Every other name can be applied by any one to the thing or being to which it belongs. The word "I" as the designation of a being has a meaning only when given to that being by himself. Never can any outside voice call us by the name of "I." We can apply it only to ourselves. "I am only an 'I' to myself; to every one else I am a 'you,' and every one else is a 'you' to me." This fact is the outward expression of a deeply significant truth. The real essence of the ego is independent of everything outside it, and it is on this account that its name cannot be applied to it by any one else. This is the reason why those religious confessions which have consciously maintained their connection with occult science, speak of the word "I" as the "unutterable name of God." For the fact above mentioned is exactly what is referred to when this expression is used. Nothing outward has access to that part of the

human soul of which we are now speaking. It is the "hidden sanctuary" of the soul. Only a being of like nature with the soul can win entrance there. "The divinity dwelling in man speaks when the soul recognizes itself as an ego." Just as the sentient and intellectual souls dwell in the outer world, so a third soul-principle is immersed in the divine when the soul becomes conscious of its own nature.

In this connection a misunderstanding may easily arise; it may seem as though occult science pronounced the ego to be one with God. But it by no means says that the ego is God, only that it is of the same nature and essence as God. Does any one declare the drop of water taken from the ocean to be the ocean, when he asserts that the drop and the ocean are the same in essence or substance? If a comparison is needed, we may say, "The ego is related to God as the drop of water is to the ocean." Man is able to find a divine element within him, because his original essence is derived directly from the divine. Thus man, through the third principle of his soul, attains to an inner knowledge of himself, just as through his astral body he gains knowledge of the outer world. For this reason occult science calls the third soul-principle the self-conscious soul, and it holds that the soul-part of man consists of three principles, the sentient, intellectual, and self-conscious souls, just as the bodily

part has three principles, the physical, etheric, and astral bodies.

The real nature of the ego is first revealed in the self-conscious soul. Through feeling and reason the soul loses itself in other things; but as the self-conscious soul it lays hold of its own essence. Therefore this ego can only be perceived through the self-conscious soul by a certain inner activity. The images of external objects are formed as those objects come and go, and the images go on working in the intellect by virtue of their own force. But if the ego is to perceive itself, it cannot merely *surrender* itself; it must first, by inner activity, draw up its own being out of its depths, in order to become conscious of it. A new activity of the ego begins with this self-cognition,— with self-recollection. Owing to this activity, the perception of the ego in the self-conscious soul possesses an entirely different meaning for man from that conveyed by the observation of all that reaches him through the three bodily principles and the two other soul-principles. The power which reveals the ego in the self-conscious soul is in fact the same power which is manifested everywhere else in the world; only in the body and the lower soul-principles it does not come forth directly, but is manifested little by little in its effects. The lowest manifestation is through the physical body, thence a gradual ascent is made to that which fills the intellectual soul.

Indeed, we may say that with each ascending step one of the veils falls away in which the hidden centre is wrapped. • In that which fills the self-conscious soul, this hidden centre emerges unveiled into the temple of the soul. Yet it shows itself just here to be but a drop from the ocean of the all-pervading Primordial Essence; and it is here that man first has to grasp it,— this Primordial Essence. He must recognize it in himself before he is able to find it in its manifestations.

That which penetrates into the self-conscious soul like a drop from the ocean is called by occult science the spirit. In this way is the self-conscious soul united with the spirit, which is the hidden principle in all manifested things. If man wishes to lay hold of the spirit in all manifestation, he must do it in the same way in which he lays hold of the ego in the self-conscious soul. He must extend to the visible world the activity which has tied him to the perception of his ego. By this means he evolves to yet higher planes of his being. He adds something new to the principles of his body and soul. The first thing that happens is that he himself conquers what lies hidden in his lower soul-principles, and this is effected through the work which the ego carries on within the soul. How man is engaged in this work becomes evident if we compare with a high-minded idealist one who is still given up to low desires and so-called sensual pleasures. The latter becomes transmuted

into the former if he withdraws from certain lower tendencies and turns to higher ones. He thereby works from his ego upon his soul so as to enoble and spiritualize it. The ego has become the master of that man's soul-life. This may be carried so far that no desire or wish can take root in the soul unless the ego permits of its entrance. In this way the whole soul becomes a manifestation of the ego, which previously only the self-conscious soul had been. All civilized life and all spiritual effort really consist in the one work which has for its object to make the ego the master. Every one now living is engaged in this work, whether he wishes it or not, and whether or no he is conscious of the fact.

Again, by this work human nature is drawn upward to higher stages of being. Man develops new principles of his nature. These lie hidden from him behind what is manifest. If man is able by working upon his soul to make his ego master of it, so that the latter brings into manifestation what is hidden, the work may extend yet farther and may include the astral body. In that case the ego takes possession of the astral body by uniting itself with the hidden wisdom of this astral principle. In occult science the astral body which is thus conquered and transformed by the ego is called the Spirit-Self. (This is the same as what is known as "Manas" in theosophical literature, a term borrowed from the wisdom of

the East.) In the Spirit-Self a higher principle is added to human nature, one which is present as though in the germ, and which in the course of the work of the human being on itself comes forth more and more.

Man conquers his astral body by pushing through to the hidden forces lying behind it; a similar thing happens, at a later stage of development, to the etheric body: but the work on the latter is more arduous, for what is hidden in the etheric body is envelope¹ in two veils, but what is hidden in the astral body in only one.¹ Occult science gives an idea of the difference in the work on the two bodies by pointing out certain changes which may take place in man in the course of his development. Let us at first think of the way in which certain soul-qualities of man develop when the ego works upon the soul; how pleasures and desires, joys and sorrows, may change. We have only to look back to our childhood. What gave us pleasure then, what caused us pain? What have we learned in addition to what we knew as children? All this is but an expression of the

¹No hard and fast line can be drawn between the changes which are accomplished in the astral body through the activity of the ego and those taking place in the etheric body. The one merges into the other. When a man learns something, and thereby gains a certain capacity for judgment, a change takes place in his astral body; but when this judgment changes his natural disposition, so that he habituates himself to *feel* differently, in consequence of his learning, from what he did before, this means a change in his etheric body. Everything that becomes so much a man's own that he can always recall it, is based on the transformation of the etheric body. That which little by little becomes an abiding possession of the memory has its foundation in the transmission to the etheric body of the work of the astral body.

way in which the ego has gained the mastery over the astral body, for it is this principle which is the vehicle of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. Compared with these things, how little in the course of time do certain other human qualities change, for example, the temperament, the deeper peculiarities of the character, and like qualities. A passionate child will often retain certain tendencies to sudden anger during its development in later life.

This is such a striking fact that there are thinkers who entirely deny the possibility of changing the fundamental character. They assume that it is something permanent throughout life, and that it is merely a question of its being manifested in one way or another. But such an opinion is due to defective observation. To one who is capable of seeing such things, it is evident that even the character and temperament of a person may be transformed under the influence of his ego. It is true that this change is slow in comparison with the change in the qualities before mentioned. We may compare the relation to each other of the rates of change in the two bodies to the movements of the hour-hand and minute-hand of a clock. Now the forces which bring about a change of character or temperament belong to the hidden forces of the etheric body. They are of the same nature as the forces which govern the kingdom of life,—the same, therefore,

as the forces of growth, nutrition, and generation. Further explanations in this work will throw the right light on these things.

Thus it is not when man simply gives himself up to pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, that the ego is working on the astral body, but when the peculiarities of these qualities of the soul are changed; and the work is extended in the same way to the etheric body, when the ego applies its energies to changing the character or temperament. This change, too, is one in which every person living is engaged, whether consciously or not. The most powerful incitement to this kind of change in ordinary life is that given by religion. If the ego allows the impulses which flow from religion to work upon it again and again, they become a power within it which extends to the etheric body and changes it as lesser impulses in life effect the transformation of the astral body. These lesser impulses, which come to man through study, reflection, the ennobling of feeling, and so on, are subject to the manifold changes of existence; but the religious feelings impress a certain stamp of uniformity upon all thinking, feeling, and willing. They diffuse an equal and single light over the whole life of the soul.

Man thinks and feels one thing to-day, another to-morrow, the causes of which are of many different kinds; but one who, through his religious convictions consistently held, has a glimpse of

something which persists through all changes, will relate his thoughts and feelings of to-day, as well as his experiences of to-morrow, to that fundamental feeling he possesses. Thus religious belief has the power of permeating the whole of the soul-life. Its influences increase in strength as time goes on because they are constantly repeated. Hence they acquire the power of working upon the etheric body.

In a similar way does the influence of true art affect man. If, going beyond the outer form, colour, and tone of a work of art, he penetrates to its spiritual foundations with his imagination and feeling, then the impulses thus received by the ego actually reach the etheric body. When this thought is followed out to its logical conclusion, the immense significance of art in all human evolution may be estimated. Only a few instances are pointed out here of what induces the ego to work upon the etheric body. There are many similar influences in human life which are not so apparent at the first glance. But these instances are enough to show that there is yet another principle of man's nature hidden within him, which the ego is making more and more manifest. Occult science denotes this second principle of the spirit the "Life-Spirit." (It is the same which in current theosophical literature is called *Buddhi*, a term borrowed from Eastern wisdom.) The expression "Life-Spirit" is appropriate, because

the same forces are at work within what it denotes as in the vital body, with the difference that when they are manifesting in the latter the ego is not active. When, however, these powers express themselves as the Life-Spirit, they are interpenetrated by the ego.

Man's intellectual development, the purification and ennobling of his feelings and of the manifestations of his will, are the measure of the degree in which he has transformed the astral body into the Spirit-Self. His religious experiences, as well as many others, are stamped upon the etheric body, making it into the Life-Spirit. In the ordinary course of life this happens more or less unconsciously; so-called initiation, on the contrary, consists in man's being directed by occult science to the means through which he may quite consciously take in hand this work in the Spirit-Self and Life-Spirit. These means will be dealt with in later parts of this book. In the meantime it is important to show that besides the soul and the body, the spirit also is working within man. It will be seen later how this spirit belongs to the eternal part of man, as contrasted with the perishable body.

But the work of the ego on the astral and etheric bodies does not exhaust its activity, which is also extended to the physical body. A slight effect of the influence of the ego on the physical body may be seen when certain experiences cause

a person to blush or turn pale. In this case the ego is actually the occasion of a process in the physical body. Now if through the activity of the ego in man, changes occur influencing the physical body, the ego is really united with the hidden forces of the physical body, that is, with the same forces which bring about its physical processes. Occult science says that during such activity the ego is working on the physical body. This expression must not be misunderstood. It must on no account be supposed that this work is of a grossly material nature. What appears as gross material in the physical body is merely the manifested part of it; behind this are the hidden forces of its being, which are of a spiritual nature. When the ego puts forth its energies in the manner described, it unites itself, not with the outer material manifestation of the physical body, but with the invisible forces which bring that body into being and afterwards cause it to decay. This work of the ego on the physical body can only very partially become clear to man's consciousness in ordinary life. It can become fully clear only when, under the influence of occult science, man consciously takes the work into his own hands. Then he becomes aware that there is a third spiritual principle within him. It is that which occult science calls the "Spirit-Man," as contrasted with physical man. (In theosophical literature this "Spirit-Man" is known as *Âtmâ*.)

Again, with regard to the Spirit-Man, it is easy to make a mistake. In the physical body we see man's lowest principle, and on this account find it hard to realize that the work on that body should be accomplished by the highest principle of the human entity. But just because the spirit active within the physical body is hidden under three veils, the highest kind of human effort is needed in order to make the ego one with that which is the hidden spiritual energy of the body.

Occult science, therefore, represents man as a being composed of many principles. Those of a bodily nature are:

- the physical body,
- the etheric or vital body,
- the astral body.

The soul-principles are:

- the sentient soul,
- the intellectual or rational soul,
- the self-conscious soul.

It is in the soul that the ego diffuses its light.

Of a spiritual nature are:

- the Spirit-Self,
- the Life-Spirit,
- the Spirit-Man.

It follows from what was said above that the sentient soul and the astral body are closely united and in a certain sense are one. Similarly, the self-conscious soul and the Spirit-Self form a whole, for in the self-conscious soul the spirit

shines forth, and thence irradiates with its light the other principles of human nature. Hence occult science also speaks of man's organization as follows. The intellectual soul is called simply the ego, because it partakes of the nature of the ego, and in a certain sense is the ego, not yet conscious of its spiritual nature. We thus have seven divisions of man:

- (1) physical body;
- (2) etheric or vital body;
- (3) astral body;
- (4) ego;
- (5) Spirit-Self;
- (6) Life-Spirit;
- (7) Spirit-Man.

Even one accustomed to materialistic habits of thought would not find in this sevenfold organization of man the "fanciful magic" often attributed to it, if he would keep strictly to the meaning of the above explanations, and not at once introduce the idea of something magic into the matter. Occult science speaks of these seven principles of man in exactly the same way, only from the standpoint of a higher form of observation of the world, as allusion is commonly made to the seven colours that make up white light, or to the seven notes of the scale (the octave being regarded as a repetition of the keynote). As light appears in seven colours, and sound in seven tones, so is the unity of man's nature manifested in the seven

principles described. No more superstition attaches to the number seven in the case of occult science than when associated with the spectrum or with the scale.

On an occasion when these facts were put forward verbally, it was objected that the statement about the number seven does not apply to colours, since there are others beyond the red and violet rays, invisible to the eye. But even in this respect the comparison with colours holds good, for, in fact, the human being expands beyond the physical body on the one side, and beyond the Spirit-Man on the other; only to the methods of spiritual observation of which occult science first relates, these continuations of man are "spiritually" invisible, just as the colours beyond red and violet are physically invisible. It was necessary to say this much, because the opinion so easily arises that occult science does not seriously apply itself to scientific thinking, but treats matters as an amateur. But one who carefully considers the meaning of the statements made by occult science will find that in reality it is never at variance with genuine science; neither when it brings forward the facts of natural science as illustrations, nor when its statements are directly connected with natural research.

CHAPTER III

SLEEP AND DEATH

THE nature of waking consciousness cannot be fathomed without observing that condition which man experiences during sleep, and the problem of life cannot be approached without studying death. Any one failing to perceive the importance of occult science may distrust the manner in which it studies sleep and death. Occult science is, however, capable of appreciating the motives from which such distrust arises. For there is nothing incomprehensible in the assertion that man exists for active, purposeful life, that his acts depend on his devotion thereto, and that absorption in such conditions as sleep and death can result only from a taste for idle dreaming, and can lead to nothing else than vain imaginings.

The refusal to accept anything of so fantastic a nature may readily be regarded as the expression of a sound mind, while indulgence in such "idle dreaming" is accounted morbid, and a pursuit fit only for people in whom the joy and ardour of life are lacking, and who are incapable of "real work." It would be wrong to set this assertion aside at once as an injustice, for it contains a certain grain of truth. It is one quarter

truth, and must be completed by the remaining three quarters belonging to it. Now if we dispute the one quarter which is right, with him who recognizes that one quarter quite distinctly but who does not dream of the other three quarters, we only rouse his suspicions. For it must indeed be unconditionally granted that the study of that which lies hidden in sleep and death is morbid if it leads to weakness or to estrangement from real life. No less must we admit that much of that which has always called itself occult science in the world, and which is even now practised under that name, bears the impression of what is unhealthy and hostile to life; but this certainly does not spring from genuine occultism.

The real fact of the matter is this, that just as a man cannot always be awake, neither is he sufficiently equipped for the actual conditions of life in its entire range without that which occult science has to offer him. Life continues during sleep, and the forces which work and labour during the waking state draw their strength and refreshment from that which sleep gives them. It is thus with the things under our observation in the manifested world. The boundaries of the world are wider than is the field of the latter observation; and what man recognizes in the visible must be supplemented and fertilized by what he is able to know of the invisible world. A man who did not continually renew his exhausted

forces by sleep, would bring his life to destruction; and in the same way a view of the world which is not fertilized by a knowledge of the unseen, must lead to a feeling of desolation.

It is similarly so with regard to death. Living creatures fall a prey to death in order that new life may arise. It is precisely occult science which throws light on Goethe's beautiful phrase: "Nature invented Death in order to have much Life." Just as in the ordinary sense there could be no life without death, so can there be no real knowledge of the visible world without insight into the invisible. All discernment of the visible must plunge again and again into the invisible in order to develop. Thus it is evident that occult science alone makes the life of revealed knowledge possible. In its true form it never enfeebles life, but strengthens it and ever renews its freshness and health, when, left to its own resources, it has become weak and diseased.

When a man sinks into sleep the connection between his principles changes, as described earlier in this work. The part of the sleeping man which lies upon his couch comprises the physical and etheric bodies, but not the astral body and not the ego. It is because the etheric body remains bound to the physical body in sleep that the life-activities continue. For the moment the physical body is left to itself, it must of necessity fall into decay. The things that are extinguished

in sleep are ideas, pain, pleasure, joy, grief, the ability to express conscious will, and similar faculties of existence. But the astral body is the vehicle of all these things. That the astral body, with its joy and sorrow, its realm of thought and will, is annihilated in sleep is an opinion that cannot be entertained by an unbiassed judgment; it exists still, but in another condition. In order that the human ego and the astral body may not only be endowed with pleasure and pain and all the other things we have named, but also have a conscious perception of them, it is necessary that the astral body should be united with the physical and etheric bodies. This is the case during waking life, but not in sleep. The astral body has withdrawn itself from the other bodies. It has adopted another kind of existence than that which it possesses while united with the physical and etheric bodies. Now it is the task of occult science to study this other kind of existence in the astral body. During sleep, the astral body vanishes from observation in the outer world: and occult science must trace it in its hidden life until it again takes possession of its physical and etheric bodies on awaking.

As in all cases when knowledge of the hidden things and events of life have to be dealt with, clairvoyant observation is necessary for the discovery of the real facts of the sleep state in its true nature, but if that which may be discovered

by this means has once been made clear, it is comprehensible to really unprejudiced thought without further demonstration. For events in the unseen world show themselves by their effects in the world of manifestation. If what is revealed by clairvoyant vision is an explanation of visible events, such a confirmation by life is the proof which may rightly be demanded. Even one who will not use the means to be given later for the attainment of clairvoyant vision may have the following experience: he may, in the first place, take the statements of the clairvoyant for granted, and then apply them to the material events within his experience. He will then find that life thereby becomes clear and comprehensible; and the more exact and minute his observations of ordinary life, the more readily will he come to this conclusion.

Even though the astral body during sleep passes through no experiences, though it is not conscious of pleasure, pain, and the like, it does not remain inactive. Rather is it the case that active work is its function in the sleep state. For it is the astral body which strengthens and recuperates man's forces, exhausted during waking life. As long as the astral body is united with the physical and etheric bodies it is related to the outer world through these two bodies. They convey to it perceptions and representations. Through the impressions which they receive from

their surroundings, it experiences pleasure and pain. Now the physical body can be preserved in the form and shape suitable to the individual only by means of the human etheric body. But this human form can be preserved only by an etheric body which on its part receives corresponding forces from the astral body. The etheric body is the builder, the architect, of the physical body. It can, however, build in the true sense only when it receives from the astral body the impulse as to the manner in which it must build. In this latter are contained the models, according to which the etheric body gives the physical body its form. During our waking hours these models for the physical body are not present in the astral body, or, at least, only to a certain extent. For in waking life the soul replaces these models with its own images. When a person directs his senses upon his environment he thus creates in his ideas pictures which are copies of the world around him. These copies at first disturb the prototypes which give the etheric body the impulse to preserve the physical body. Such disturbance could not be present if a man, by virtue of his own activity, could convey to his astral body those pictures which would give the right impulse to the etheric body. Yet this very disturbance plays an important part in human life, and is able to express itself because the models for the etheric body do not come into full

play in the waking state. This fact is revealed by "fatigue." Now, during sleep, no external impressions disturb the force of the astral body. Therefore in this condition it can expel fatigue. The work of the astral body during sleep consists in removing fatigue, and it can accomplish this only on leaving the physical and etheric bodies. During waking life the astral body does its work within the physical body; during sleep it works on the latter from outside.

For instance, just as the physical body has need of the outer world, which is of like substance with itself, for its supply of food, something of the same kind takes place in the case of the astral body. Let us imagine a physical human body removed from the surrounding world: it would die. That shows that physical life is an impossibility without the entire physical environment. In fact, the whole earth must be just as it is if physical human bodies are to exist upon it. For, in reality, the whole human body is only a part of the earth,—indeed, in a wider sense, part of the whole physical universe. In this respect it is related in the same sense as, for example, the finger of a hand to the entire human body. Separate the finger from the hand and it cannot remain a finger: it withers away. Such would also be the fate of the human body were it removed from that body of which it is a member,—from the conditions of life with which the earth provides

it. Let it be raised above the surface of the earth but a sufficient number of miles and it will perish as the finger perishes when cut off from the hand. If this fact is less apparent in the case of a man's physical organism than in that of his finger and his body, it is merely because the finger cannot walk about on the body as man is able to do on the earth, and because on that account the dependence of the former is more obvious.

In the same way that the physical body is embedded in the physical world to which it belongs, so does the astral body form a part of its own world, only it is torn out of it in waking life. We can form a clear idea of what happens by having recourse to an analogy. Imagine a vessel filled with water. No one drop is a separate thing in itself within that entire mass of water. But let us take a little sponge and with it suck up a single drop from the whole mass of water. Something of this kind happens to the human astral body on awaking. During sleep it is in a world resembling its own nature. In a certain sense it forms part of it. On awaking, the physical and etheric bodies suck it up: they absorb it; they contain the organs through which it observes the outer world. In order to achieve this observation it has to leave its own world, though it is in that world alone that it can receive the models which it needs for the etheric body.

Just as food is supplied to the physical body from its surroundings, so are the pictures of the world surrounding the astral body presented to it during the state of sleep. There, indeed, it lives in the universe, beyond the physical and etheric bodies: in that same universe out of which the whole man is born. The source of the images by means of which man receives his form is in this universe. He is linked in harmony with it; and when he awakes he rises above the surface of this all-pervading harmony to attain external perception. In sleep his astral body returns to the universal harmony. He brings so much strength from it to his bodies on awaking that he can once more dispense for a time with sojourning in the realm of harmony. The astral body returns during sleep to its home, and, on awaking, brings back into life freshly invigorated forces. That which the astral body thus gains, and brings with it on waking, finds its outer expression in the refreshment afforded by sound sleep.

Further exposition of occult science will show that this home of the astral body is more extensive than that which belongs to the physical body in the narrower sense of the physical environment. Thus, while man as a physical being is a member of this earth, his astral body belongs to worlds in which other heavenly bodies besides our earth are included. During sleep, therefore,—this can

be made clear, as we have said, only by further explanations,—it enters a world to which other stars than the earth belong. In recognition of the fact that man lives during sleep in a world of stars, that is, in an astral world, occult science calls that principle of man which has its real home in that “astral” world and which, every time it returns to the sleep state, draws renewed force from that world, the “astral body.”

It should be superfluous to point out that a misunderstanding might easily arise with regard to these facts; in our time, however, when certain materialistic modes of representation exist, it becomes not altogether unnecessary. In quarters where such representation prevails it may, of course, be said that such a thing as fatigue can be scientifically investigated only in accordance with physical conditions. Even if the learned are not yet unanimous with regard to the physical cause of fatigue, one thing is quite firmly established: we must accept certain physical processes which lie at the root of this phenomenon. It would be well, however, if it were recognized that occult science does not in any way oppose this assertion. It admits everything that is said in this connection, just as it is admitted that for the physical erection of a house one brick must be laid upon another, and that when the house is finished its form and construction can be explained by purely mechanical laws.

But the thought of the architect is necessary for the building of the house. This cannot be discovered merely by examination of physical laws.

Just as the thought of the creator of a house stands behind the physical laws which make it explicable, so too, behind what is affirmed, with perfect accuracy, by physical science does there stand that of which occult science treats. This comparison is of course often put forward when the justification for a spiritual background to the world is in question; and it may be considered a trivial one. But what is important in such matters is not familiarity with certain conceptions, but that the proper weight should be given them in establishing a fact. One may be prevented from doing this simply because contrary ideas have so much power over the judgment that this weight is not felt.

Dreaming is an intermediate state between sleeping and waking. What dream experiences offer to thoughtful observation is the many-coloured interweaving of a picture-world, which nevertheless conceals within itself some sort of law and order. At first this world seems to have an ebb and flow, often in confused succession. Man in his dream-life is set free from the laws of waking consciousness which bind him to sense-perception and the laws of reason. And yet dreams have some sort of mysterious

law, attractive and fascinating to human speculation, and this is the deeper reason why the beautiful play of imagination lying at the root of artistic feeling is always apt to be compared to dreaming. We need only recall a few characteristic dreams to find this corroborated. A man dreams, for example, that he is driving off a dog that is attacking him. He wakes, and finds himself in the act of unconsciously pushing off part of the bedclothes which had been lying on an unaccustomed part of his body and which had therefore become oppressive. What is it that dream-life makes in this instance out of an incident perceptible to the senses? In the first place, it leaves in complete unconsciousness what the senses would perceive in the waking state. But it holds fast something essential—namely, the fact that the man wishes to repel something; and round about this it weaves a metaphorical occurrence.

The pictures, as such, are echoes of waking life. There is something arbitrary in the way in which they are drawn from it. Every one feels that with the same exterior cause the dream might conjure up various pictures before him. But they give symbolic expression to the feeling that the man has something to ward off. The dream creates symbols; it is a symbolist. Inner experiences can also be transformed into such dream-symbols. A man dreams that a fire is

crackling beside him; he sees flames in his dream. He wakes up feeling that he is too heavily covered and has become too warm. The feeling of too great warmth expresses itself symbolically in the picture. Quite dramatic experiences may be enacted in a dream. For example, some one dreams that he is standing on the edge of a precipice. He sees a child running toward it. The dream makes him experience all the tortures of the thought—if only the child will not be heedless and fall over into the abyss! He sees it fall, and hears the dull thud of the body below. He awakes, and perceives that an object which had been hanging on the wall of the room has become unfastened, and made a dull sound by its fall. This simple event is expressed in dream-life by one which unravels itself in exciting pictures. For the present it is not at all necessary to engage in reflection as to the reason why, in the last example, the moment of the falling of a heavy object expresses itself in a series of events which seem to spread themselves over a certain length of time; it is only necessary to keep in view that the dream transforms into a picture that which would present itself to the waking sense-perception.

We see that the moment the senses cease their activity, creative power asserts itself in man. It is the same creative power which is present in absolutely dreamless sleep, and then recuperates

man's exhausted forces. For this dreamless sleep to take place, the astral body must be withdrawn from the etheric and physical bodies. During the dream-state it is so far separated from the physical body as to have no further connection with the organs of sense; but it still maintains a certain connection with the etheric body. The capacity for perceiving the experiences of the astral body by means of pictures is due to this connection which it maintains with the etheric body. The moment this connection also ceases, the pictures sink into the obscurity of unconsciousness and dreamless sleep has set in.

The arbitrary and often nonsensical element in dream-pictures arises from the fact that the astral body cannot, on account of its separation from the sense-organs of the physical body, relate its pictures to the correct objects and events of the outer environment. It is especially illuminating, in this matter, to examine a dream in which the ego is, as it were, split up. Take, for example, the case of some one who dreams that he is a schoolboy and cannot answer the question put to him by his teacher, although immediately afterwards the teacher answers it himself. The dreamer, being unable to make use of his physical organs of perception, is not able to connect both occurrences with himself, as the same individual. Therefore, if only to be able to recognize himself as a permanent ego,

man must first be equipped with outer organs of perception. Only when he had acquired the faculty of self-consciousness without the aid of such organs would the permanent ego also become perceptible to him outside his physical body. Clairvoyant consciousness has to acquire this faculty, and the method of so doing will be treated in detail later in this work.

Even death takes place for no other cause than a change in the connection of the principles of man's being. And what is visible to clairvoyant observation with regard to death may also be seen in its effects in the manifested world; in this case also, an unbiassed judgment will find the teachings of occult science confirmed by observing external life. The expression of the invisible in the visible is, however, less evident with regard to these facts, and there is greater difficulty in feeling the full importance of that which in the events of outer life endorses the statements of occult science in this domain. These statements may be pronounced to be merely fancy-pictures, even more readily than many other things that have been dealt with in this work, if we shut ourselves off from the knowledge that everywhere in the visible is contained an unmistakable foreshadowing of the invisible.

Whereas, on the approach of sleep, only the astral body is released from its connection with the etheric and physical bodies, which still remain

united to each other, at death the separation of the physical from the etheric body takes place. The physical body is abandoned to its own forces, and must therefore become disintegrated as a corpse. At death the etheric body finds itself in a condition in which it has never been before between the time of its birth and death,—with the exception of certain abnormal conditions to be dealt with later. That is to say, it is now united to the astral body in the absence of the physical body; for the etheric and astral bodies do not separate immediately after death: they are held together for a time by the agency of a force, the presence of which can be easily understood, for were this force not present the etheric body could not detach itself from the physical body. It would remain bound to the latter, as is shown by sleep, when the astral body is not able to rend asunder these two principles of man's being. This force comes into action at death. It releases the etheric from the physical body, so that the former remains united to the astral body. Clairvoyant observation shows that this connection varies with different people after death. The time of its duration is measured by days. For the present, this period of time is mentioned only for the sake of information.

Subsequently, the astral body is also released from the etheric body and goes on its way alone. During the union of the two bodies the individual

s in a state which enables him to be aware of the experiences of his astral body. As long as the physical body is there, the work of reinforcing the wasted organs has to be begun from without, directly the astral body is liberated from it. When once the physical body is separated, this work ceases. Nevertheless, the force which was expended in this fashion, when the man was asleep, continues after death and can now be applied to some other end. It is now used for making the astral body's own experiences perceptible. During his connection with his physical body the outer world enters the man's consciousness in images; after the body has been laid aside, that which is experienced by the astral body, when it is no longer connected by sense organs with this outer physical world, becomes perceptible. At first it has no new experiences. Its connection with the etheric body prevents it from experiencing anything new. What, however, it does possess, is *memory* of its past life. The etheric body still being present causes that past life to appear as a vivid and comprehensive panorama. That is man's first experience after death. He sees his life from birth to death spread out before him in a series of pictures. While this life lasts, memory is present only in the waking state, when man is united with his physical body, and it is present only to the extent allowed by that body, but

nothing is lost to the soul that has made an impression on it during life. Were the physical body a perfect instrument for the purpose, it would be possible, at any moment during life, to conjure up the whole of the past before the eyes of the soul. At death there is no longer any obstacle to this. As long as the etheric body remains, there exists a certain degree of perfection of memory. But this disappears according to the degree in which the etheric body loses the form which it possessed while united with the physical body, and which resembles that body. This is the very reason why the astral body separates, after a time, from the etheric body. It can remain united with the latter only so long as the form of the etheric body corresponds with that of the physical body.

During the period of life between birth and death, separation of the etheric body occurs only in exceptional cases, and for no longer than a brief space of time. If, for example, a man exposes one of his limbs to pressure, part of his etheric body may become separated from the physical one. We say on such an occasion that the limb has "gone to sleep," and the peculiar sensation we feel results from the separation of the etheric body. (Of course a materialistic manner of explanation may here again deny the invisible behind the visible and say all that arises merely from the physical disturbance

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caused by the pressure.) Clairvoyant vision can see in such a case how the corresponding part of the etheric body is extruded from the physical limb. Now if a man experiences an unusual shock, or something similar, such a separation of the etheric body from a large part of the physical body may result, for a short time. That is the case when a man for some reason or other is suddenly brought face to face with death,—for example when drowning, or threatened by a fatal accident when mountaineering. What is related by people who have had such experiences comes, in fact, very near the truth, and can be ratified by clairvoyant observation. They declare that in such moments their whole lives pass before their minds as though in a huge memory-picture.

Out of the many examples which might here be adduced, allusion will be made to one only, because it originates from a man to whose mode of thought everything that is here said about such things must seem pure fancy.¹ Moriz Benedict, the distinguished criminal anthropologist and an eminent investigator in many other

¹As a matter of fact, it is always very profitable for any one who is taking up the study of occult science to acquaint himself with the statements of those who regard this science as merely fanciful. Such statements cannot be so easily branded as due to partiality on the part of the observer. Let occultists learn as much as possible from those who regard their efforts as nonsense. They need not be disturbed if in this respect their love is not reciprocated. Occult observation assuredly does not require such things for the verification of its results, nor are these allusions intended as proofs but as illustrations.

realms of natural science, relates in his *Reminiscences* an experience of his own,—to the effect that he had once, when on the point of drowning in a bath, seen his whole life pass before his memory as though in a single picture. If other people describe differently the pictures seen by them under similar circumstances, and even in such a way that they seem to have little to do with the events of their past life, that does not contradict what has been said; for the pictures which arise in the quite abnormal condition of separation from the physical body are sometimes at first sight unintelligible in their relation to life. Correct observation, however, would always recognize this relationship.

Neither is it an objection if, for example, some one who was once on the point of drowning did not experience what has been described; for it must be borne in mind that this can happen only when the etheric body is really separated from the physical body,—when, moreover, the former is still united with the astral body. If, through the fright, a loosening of the etheric and astral bodies also takes place, the experience is not forthcoming, because then complete unconsciousness ensues, as in dreamless sleep.

Immediately after death the events of the past appear as though compressed by the memory into a picture. After its separation from the etheric body, the astral body pursues its further

wanderings alone. It is not difficult to realize that everything continues to exist which by means of its activity the astral body has made its own during its sojourn in the physical body. The ego has to a certain extent elaborated the Spirit-Self, the Life-Spirit, and the Spirit-Man. So far as these are developed, they do not owe their existence to the organs present in the different bodies, but to the ego; and it is precisely the ego which needs no outer organs for perception; nor does it require any such organs in order to retain possession of what it has made one with itself. It might be objected: "Why then is there no perception during sleep of the developed Spirit-Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit-Man?" On this account —because the ego is chained between birth and death to the physical body. Even though, during sleep, it is out of the physical body with the astral one, it nevertheless remains closely connected with the physical body; for the activity of the astral body is directed toward the physical body. On this account the ego is relegated to the outer world of sense for its observations, and cannot receive spiritual revelations in their direct form. Not until death do these revelations come within reach of the ego, because by means of death the ego is freed from its connection with the physical and etheric bodies. Another world may flash upon the consciousness the moment it is withdrawn from the physical

world which during life monopolizes its activity.

Now there are reasons why even at this juncture all connection with the outer physical world of sense does not cease for man. That is to say, certain desires remain which sustain the connection. There are desires which man creates just because he is conscious of his ego as the fourth principle of his being. These desires and wishes, springing from the existence of his three lower bodies, can operate only in the external world, and cease to operate when these bodies are cast aside. Hunger is caused by the external body; as soon as that external body is no longer connected with the ego, hunger ceases. Now, had the ego no further desires than those springing from its own spiritual nature, it might at death draw full satisfaction from the spiritual world into which it is transplanted. But life has given it other desires as well. It has kindled in it a longing for pleasures only to be enjoyed by means of physical organs, although these pleasures themselves do not originate in the nature of those organs. It is not only the three bodies which demand gratification from the physical world, but the ego itself finds pleasures in that world, for the enjoyment of which there exist no means whatever in the spiritual world.

During life the ego has two kinds of desires: those that spring from the bodies and must therefore be gratified within the bodies, but which

must also come to an end with their disintegration; and those that arise from the spiritual nature of the ego. So long as the ego lives in the bodies, those cravings are satisfied by means of the bodily organs. For in the manifestations of the bodily organs the hidden spiritual element is at work, and the senses receive something spiritual as well, in everything of which they are cognizant. That spiritual element is also present after death, although in a different form. Everything spiritual that the ego longs for while in the world of sense, it still possesses when the senses are no longer there.

Now if a third kind of wish were not added to these two, death would mean only a transition from desires which may be satisfied through the senses to such as are fulfilled by the revelation of the spiritual world. The third kind of desire is that which is created by the ego during life in the sense-world, because it finds pleasure in that world, even when no spiritual element is revealed in it. The humblest pleasures may be manifestations of the spirit. The satisfaction afforded a starving creature by taking food is a manifestation of the spirit, for by taking the food something is thereupon brought about without which, in a certain sense, the spiritual nature could not develop. But the ego may go beyond the pleasure, which in this case is the outcome of necessity. It may even long for the delicious food quite

apart from the service rendered to the spirit by taking nourishment.

It is the same with other things in the sense-world. Desires are created in this way which would never have appeared in the sense-world if the human ego had not been incorporated in it. Neither do such desires arise from the spiritual nature of the ego. The ego must have pleasures of the senses as long as it lives in the body, even though it be for the very reason that its own nature is spiritual. For the spirit is manifested in material things, and the ego is enjoying nothing less than spirit when it surrenders itself to that element in the sense-world which is irradiated by the light of the spirit. Moreover, it will continue to enjoy this light even when the senses are no longer the medium through which the spiritual rays pass. But there is no fulfilment possible in the spiritual world for desires in which the spirit is not living even in the world of the senses.

When death takes place, the possibility of gratifying desires of this description is cut off. Pleasure in good things to eat can be induced only by the presence of the physical organs required for their consumption,—the palate, tongue, and so on; but when man has laid aside his physical body he no longer possesses these organs, and if the ego still craves for that kind of pleasure the craving must remain unsatisfied. So

long as the pleasure is subservient to the spiritual need, it is caused only by the presence of the physical organs; but should it happen that the ego has created the desire without serving the spirit in so doing, he retains it after death in the form of a craving which thirsts in vain for gratification. We can form an idea of what the individual then experiences only by imagining some one suffering from burning thirst in a region where, far and wide, there is no water to be found. This is the predicament of the ego after death, so long as it retains ungratified desires for the pleasures of the outer world, and has no organs by means of which to satisfy them. Of course the burning thirst, serving as a comparison for the condition of the ego after death, must be thought of as enormously increased, and it must be imagined as extending to all desires still existing, for which all possibility of gratification is lacking.

The next condition of the ego consists in freeing itself from this bond of attraction to the outer world. With regard to this world, it has to attain purification and liberation. It must be cleansed of all wishes which it has created while in the body, and which have no native rights in the spiritual world. As an object is caught and burned up by fire, so the world of desire, described above, is broken up and destroyed after death. A vista is then opened into that world which

occult science calls the "consuming fire" of the spirit. This fire seizes upon a desire which is of the senses, but in which these are not an expression of the spirit. Revelations of this kind which occult science is bound to make with regard to such events may appear hopeless and terrible. It may seem a fearful thing that a hope, for the realization of which sense-organs are required, should after death be transformed into despair, and that a wish that can be fulfilled only by the physical world should be changed into torturing deprivation. Yet we can hold such an opinion only so long as we fail to realize that the wishes and desires seized by the "consuming fire" after death do not, in a higher sense, represent forces beneficial to life but destructive of it.

By means of these forces the ego binds itself to the sense-world more closely than is necessary, in order to draw from it all the experience it requires. For the sense-world is a manifestation of the hidden and spiritual world which lies behind it; and the ego could never attain spiritual happiness through the bodily senses, which are the only form in which the spiritual can be manifested, unless it utilized the senses to seek the spiritual element in sense-experience. Nevertheless, the ego loses sight of the true spiritual reality in the physical world to such an extent that it experiences sensual desires irrespective of the needs of the spirit. If sense-

pleasure, as the expression of the spirit, serves to raise and develop the ego, any pleasure which is not an expression of the spirit warps and impoverishes it. No matter if this kind of desire finds the means of its gratification in the outer world, its warping effect on the ego is in no way diminished; but it is not until after death that its disastrous effects become apparent.

For this reason a man may, by gratifying such desires, create, during his life, new and similar desires, wholly unaware that he is enveloping himself in a "consuming fire." What becomes visible to him after death is only what already surrounded him during his life, and by thus becoming visible it at once appears in its salutary and beneficent effect. A human being who loves another is certainly not attracted merely by that part of him which is perceptible to the physical senses—the only part which is cut off from observation after death—but after death, that part of the dear one for the perception of which physical organs were only the means, is the very part which then becomes visible. The one thing, in fact, which would prevent the man from beholding his friend clearly is the presence of desires which can be satisfied only by means of physical organs. Unless these desires are extinguished, he can have no conscious perception of his friend after death. When looked at in this light, the terrible and hopeless character which

after-death experiences, according to the descriptions given by occult science, might assume for man, becomes changed into one which is thoroughly satisfying and consoling.

Now the first after-death experiences differ entirely in yet another respect from those of our present life. During the time of purification man lives, as it were, backwards. He lives over again the whole span of his life since his birth; beginning with the events immediately preceding his death, and reversing the order of his experiences, he goes through them again until he reaches back to childhood. In this process he sees with spiritually enlightened eyes all those things which were not inspired by the spiritual nature of the ego, with the difference that he now experiences these things in a reversed position.

For instance, a man who died in his sixtieth year, and who at the age of forty had, in an outburst of anger, caused some one either physical or mental pain, will go through this experience again when, on the return journey of existence after death, he reaches that point in his fortieth year; but he does not now experience the satisfaction which his attack had afforded him during life; instead, he experiences the pain which he inflicted upon the other man. It may at once be seen, however, that whatever pain he feels in the after-death experience is caused by a desire of the ego arising only from the outer physical

world; that is to say, the ego does not, in fact, injure only another by the indulgence of such a desire, but he also injures himself; though the injury to himself is not apparent during life.

After death, however, the whole of the harmful world of desires becomes visible to the ego, who then feels attracted toward every being or object which had kindled the desire, in order that this may be destroyed in the "consuming fire" by the same means that created it. When man, on his return journey, reaches the moment of his birth, then only have all such desires been purged in the purifying flames, and henceforward nothing remains to hinder him from devoting himself entirely to the spiritual world. He enters upon a new phase of existence. In the same way that he laid aside at death his physical and, soon after, his etheric body, so does that part of his astral body which responds only to the outer physical world now fall to pieces.

Occult science, therefore, recognizes three corpses,—the physical, etheric, and astral. The period at which the last is cast off by man is marked by the time of purification, which amounts to about a third of the time which elapsed between birth and death. The reason why this is so can only be explained later, when the course of human life is examined from the standpoint of occult science. To clairvoyant observation, astral corpses, which have been cast off by human

beings passing from the state of purification into a higher existence, are constantly visible in the world surrounding man, in exactly the same way that physical corpses, in places inhabited by men, are apparent to physical observation.¹

After purification an entirely new state of consciousness begins for the ego. Whereas, before death, external images had to be brought before it, for the light of consciousness to fall on them, a world now streams, as it were, from within, and penetrates to the consciousness. The ego is living in this world also between birth and death; only then this world is clothed in the manifestations of the senses. It is only when the ego, freed from all the ties of sense, turns inward to behold its own "holy of holies" that his true innermost nature, which had hitherto been obscured by the senses, is revealed to him. In the same way that the ego is recognized inwardly before death, so, after death and purification, is the spiritual life inwardly revealed to him in all its fulness. This revelation really takes place immediately the etheric body is laid aside; but it is obscured by the dark cloud of desires turned toward the outer world. It is as if a world of spiritual bliss were invaded by black demoniacal phantoms, caused by those desires which are being destroyed by the "consuming fire." Indeed, those desires are

¹In current theosophical literature, the condition of the ego from death to the end of purification is called "Kamaloka."

not mere phantoms, but real entities, which become apparent directly the ego is deprived of physical organs, and is thus able to discern those things which are of a spiritual nature. These entities have the appearance of distorted caricatures of the objects with which the individual had formerly become acquainted through his senses.

Clairvoyant observation reports that this place of purging fire is peopled by beings whose appearance may well seem horrifying and painful to spiritual vision, whose pleasure seems to consist in destruction, and whose passions impel them to evil-doing of such a description that the evil of the physical world seems insignificant in comparison. Whatever desires of the kind described above are brought into that world by man, such desires are looked upon by these beings as food, by means of which their powers are continually strengthened and invigorated.

The picture thus sketched of a world imperceptible to the senses may seem less incredible if we look with an unprejudiced eye on part of the animal world. What is a fierce, devouring wolf, from a spiritual point of view? What does it reveal to us through that which our senses perceive? Nothing else than a soul that lives in desire, and acts by desire. The external form of the wolf may be called an embodiment of those desires; and if man had no organs with

which to perceive that form, if its desires appeared invisibly in their effects,—if, therefore, a force invisible to the eye were prowling about, and might be the cause of all that happened through the visible wolf,—he would still be forced to recognize the existence of a creature corresponding to it. Now the beings of the region of purifying fire are not visible to the physical eye, but to clairvoyant sight only; but their effects are clearly apparent. They bring about the destruction of the ego when it gives them nourishment. These effects are clearly visible if what began as a pleasure leads to excess and debauchery.

For even what is perceptible to the senses would attract the ego only in so far as the pleasure had its root in the ego's own nature. The animal is prompted by desire for that in the outer world which its three bodies crave. Man has higher enjoyments, because to the three principles of his bodily nature is added the fourth, the ego. But if the ego seeks a gratification which tends not to the maintenance and development of its nature but to its destruction, then such a craving can be neither the effect of its three bodies, nor that of its own nature, but can only be caused by beings, in their true form concealed from the senses, but able to approach furtively that higher nature of the ego, and excite in it desires which, though it is cut off from the senses, can still be satisfied only by means of sense-organs.

For there are beings which feed on passions and desires of a worse kind than those of an animal nature, because they do not expend themselves on objects of the senses but seize upon the spiritual element and drag it down to a sensual level. Therefore the forms of such beings are more hideous, more horrible, to spiritual sight than are the forms of the fiercest animals, in which after all only passions rooted in the senses are incarnated. And the destructive forces of these beings immeasurably surpass any destructive rage existing in the animal world as perceived by the senses. Occult science must in this way enlarge man's view so as to include a world of beings standing, in a certain respect, lower than the visibly destructive animal world.

When man, after death, has passed through the world of purification, he finds himself in a world the contents of which are spiritual, and which also creates in him longings which can be satisfied only by spiritual things. But even now man distinguishes between that which properly belongs to his ego and that which forms the environment of that ego—one might say, its spiritual outer world. Only whatever he becomes sensible of in this environment, pours in upon him in the same way that the consciousness of his own ego poured in upon him during his sojourn in the body. Whereas man's environment in the life between birth and death speaks to him through his bodily

organs, after all the bodies are laid aside the language of his new environment penetrates directly into the innermost sanctuary of the ego. Man's whole environment is now filled with beings of a like nature with his ego, for only an ego has access to an ego. Just as minerals, plants, and animals surround man in the sense-world, and compose it, so, after death, is he surrounded by a world composed of beings of a spiritual nature.

Yet he takes something with him into this world which is not part of his environment there; it is what the ego has experienced in the world of the senses. First of all, the sum of these experiences appeared, as a comprehensive memory-picture, immediately after death, while the etheric body was still united to the ego. The etheric body itself is then, indeed, laid aside, but something of the memory-picture remains with the ego as an everlasting possession. Just as if an extract or essence were made out of all the events and experiences which a man encounters between birth and death, so might we describe that which is left behind. It is the spiritual product of life, its fruit. This product is spiritual in nature. It contains everything spiritual which is revealed through the senses, yet this spiritual treasure could not have been gathered save by life in the sense-world.

After death, the ego realizes that this spiritual fruit of the sense-world is its very own, its inner

world, with which it enters the world composed of beings revealing themselves as only his own ego can reveal itself in the inmost recesses of his being. As a plant seed, which is the essence of the whole plant, grows only when buried in another world, the earth, so now does that which the ego brings from the sense-world gradually unfold itself as a seed under the influence of the spiritual environment in which it has been planted. Occult science can, of course, only portray in pictures what happens in this "spirit-world"; nevertheless those pictures may be such as present themselves to the clairvoyant's sight as absolute reality, when he is following up the invisible happenings, corresponding to those which are visible to the physical eye. Whatever of that world can be described may be made clear by comparisons with the external world; for although it is of a purely spiritual nature, it nevertheless resembles the physical world in certain respects. As, for instance, a colour appears in the latter world, when this or that object strikes the eye, so does a colour present itself to the ego in the spirit-world when another being influences it. But in this case, the colour is produced in the same manner, as only the perception of the ego can be affected during life between birth and death. It is not as if the light outside fell within upon the man, but as if another being directly affected the ego, causing

the latter to picture this influence in a colour-form.

Thus do all beings in the spiritual environment of the ego find expression in a world of coloured rays. As their origin is of a different kind, it goes without saying that these colours of the spiritual world are also of a somewhat different character from physical colours. A similar thing is true of other impressions received by man from the world of sense. But it is the sounds of the spiritual world that most nearly resemble the impressions of the sense-world; and the more at home a man becomes in the spiritual world, the more does he realize it as a life of self-determined motion, which may be compared with the sounds, and the harmony of sounds, of the physical world. Only he does not feel the tones as something approaching an organ from outside, but as a force streaming forth into the outer world through his ego. He feels the sound just as in the sense-world he feels his own speech or song, only that in the spiritual world he knows these sounds streaming out from him are at the same time the manifestations of other beings, who are pouring themselves into the world through him.

A still higher manifestation takes place in the spirit-land when the sound becomes the "spiritual word." Then there streams through the ego not only the pulsing life of another spiritual being, but such a being itself communicates

its own inner nature to the ego; and then, when the spiritual word streams through the ego, two beings live in one another, without that separating element which every companionship in the sense-world must carry with it. And this is really the nature of the communion of the ego with other spiritual beings after death.

There are three regions in the spiritual world, which may be compared to the three divisions of the physical sense-world. The first region is in a certain respect the "solid land" of the spiritual world, the second the "sphere of ocean and river," and the third the "atmospheric region." That which assumes physical form on earth, so as to be perceived by physical organs, is, in accordance with its spiritual nature, seen in the first region of the spirit-world. There, for instance, may be seen the force that fashions the form of a crystal. Only what is then revealed is the opposite of that which appears in the sense-world. In that world the space which is filled by a mass of rock appears to spiritual sight as a kind of hollow space; but round about this hollow is seen the force which fashions the form of the rock. The colour of the rock in the sense-world appears in the spiritual world as its complementary colour; thus a red stone is green when seen from the spirit-world, a green stone is red, and so on. Other qualities also appear in their opposites. Just as stone, masses of

earth, and like materials make up the solid land—the continental region of the world of sense—so do the structures described above compose the solid land of the spiritual world.

All that is life in the sense-world belongs to the ocean-region of the spiritual world. To the physical eye, life appears in its effects in plants, animals, and men. To spiritual vision, life is a flowing substance, like oceans and rivers, diffused through the spirit-world. A still better comparison is that with the circulation of the blood in the body; for whereas seas and rivers are seen to be irregularly distributed in the physical world, a certain regularity in distribution of the flowing life reigns in the spirit-world, as in the circulation of the blood. This “flowing life” is simultaneously heard as spiritual sound.

The third region of the spirit-world is its “atmosphere.” What is known in the physical world as “feeling” is also present there, permeating everything like the air on the earth. We must imagine a rushing sea of feeling. Pain and sorrow, joy and rapture, flow through this region, like wind and storms in the atmosphere of the physical world. Imagine a battle fought on earth. There confront one another not merely human forms as seen by the physical eye, but feelings opposed to feelings, passions to passions; pain fills the battlefield just as much as do the forms of men. All that is seething there

of passion, pain, and the joy of victory is not only perceptible in its effects as revealed to the physical senses; it may be seen with the spiritual senses as an atmospheric process in the spirit-world. Such an event in the spiritual world is like a thunderstorm in the physical, and the perception of these events may be compared to the hearing of words in the physical world. For this reason it is said that as the air envelops and permeates earthly beings, so do "interweaving spiritual words" pervade the beings and events of the spirit-world.

And yet further observations are possible of this spirit-world. What may be compared to light and heat in the physical world is there too. That which permeates everything in the spirit-world, as earthly things and beings are permeated by heat, is the world of thought itself. There, however, thoughts must be regarded as living and independent beings. What is understood by man in the manifested world as thought is but a shadow of what lives as a thought-being in the spirit-world. Imagine thought, as it now exists in man, raised out of him and as an active, energetic being, endowed with an inner life of its own, and you have a feeble illustration of that which fills the fourth region of the spirit-world. In the physical world between birth and death what man understands as thought is but the manifestation of the thought-world as it is able to

mould itself by means of the instruments afforded by the bodies. All such thoughts cherished by man as carry with them an enrichment of the physical world have their origin in this region. By such thoughts are meant not only the ideas of great inventors and men of genius; but those ideas found in every individual which he does not owe solely to the external world, but through which he, so to speak, transforms that world.

So far as feelings and passions are concerned, the cause of which lies in the outer world, these feelings are perceptible in the third region of the spirit-world; but everything which so lives in a man's soul as to make him a creator,—influencing, transforming, and fertilizing his environment,—in its original and intrinsic form is manifest in the fourth division of the spirit-world.

That which exists in the fifth region may be compared to physical light. In its archetypal form it is wisdom in manifestation. Beings who diffuse wisdom throughout their surroundings, as the sun pours light on physical beings, belong to this realm. Whatever is illuminated by their wisdom stands forth in its true meaning and significance for the spiritual world, just as the colour of a physical object is seen when the light falls upon it. There are still higher regions of the spirit-world, which will be described later in this work.

Into this world the ego is plunged after death,

together with the results it carries with it out of physical life. And these results are still united with that part of the astral body, which is not cast off at the end of the time of purification. In fact, only that part falls away which, in its desires and wishes, turned after death toward physical life. The plunging of the ego into the spiritual world, with what it has acquired in the physical world, may be compared to the planting of a grain of seed in the soil in which it can mature. As the grain of seed draws substances and forces from its surroundings in order that it may develop into a new plant, so the condition of the ego, when implanted in the spiritual world, is one of development and growth.

There lies hidden in what is perceived by an organ, the force by which that same organ was formed. The eye perceives light; but without light there would be no eye. Creatures spending their lives in darkness do not develop organs of sight. Thus the whole of man's physical body is created out of the hidden forces of that of which he becomes conscious through his bodily organs. The physical body is built up by the forces of the physical world, the etheric body by those of the life-world, and the astral body is formed out of the astral world. Now when the ego is transferred to the spirit-world it is met by just those forces which remain hidden to physical perception.

What appear to man's view in the first region of the spirit-world are the spiritual beings that are always surrounding him, and that have built up his physical body. Thus in the physical world man perceives nothing but the manifestations of those spiritual forces which have formed his own physical body. After death he is in the very midst of these moulding forces, which, previously hidden, now appear to him in their true forms. In the same way, in the second region, he is in the midst of the forces by which his etheric body was organized, and in the third region there pour in upon him the potencies out of which his astral body was formed. The higher regions of the spirit-world also direct toward him those forces from which he was built up for the life between birth and death.

These denizens of the spiritual world are at present working in coöperation with that which man has brought with him as the product of his last life, which now becomes a germ; and through this coöperation man is first of all built up anew as a spiritual being. The physical and etheric bodies are still present in sleep; the astral body and the ego are, it is true, outside them, but still connected with them. Whatever influences the astral body and the ego receive, in such a state, from the spiritual world, can serve only to recuperate the forces exhausted during the waking state.

But when the physical and etheric bodies have been laid aside, and also, after the time of purification, those parts of the astral body still bound by their desires to the physical world, then everything pouring in upon the ego from the spiritual world is not only a reforming but a reorganizing force. After a certain period, to be dealt with in later chapters, the ego gathers round it an astral body which will again be able to live in such an etheric and physical body as man possesses between birth and death. The man may once more pass through birth and renew his earthly existence, with which, however, will be incorporated the results of his former life. Until the rebuilding of his astral body, the man is a witness of his reconstruction. As the powers of the spirit-world are not manifested to him through external organs, but from within outward, like his own ego in self-consciousness, he is able to observe that manifestation so long as his attention is not turned to an outer world of perception. But from the moment that the astral body is reconstituted, his attention is turned outwards: the astral body once more craves an outer etheric and physical body. It is thus turned away from the inner revelations. For this reason there is now an intermediate state, during which man is immersed in unconsciousness. For consciousness can emerge again in the physical world only when the necessary organs for physical perception are formed.

During this period, in which consciousness illuminated by inner perception ceases, the new etheric body begins to link itself to the astral and man can once again enter a physical body. In the linking together of these two bodies only such an ego could consciously take part as had of itself created the Life-Spirit and Spirit-Man out of the creative forces hidden in the etheric and physical bodies. Until the individual has evolved as far as this, beings further advanced than himself in evolution must guide this linking together. The astral body is guided by such beings as these to parents by whose means it may be endowed with the appropriate etheric and physical bodies. Before the attachment of the etheric body takes place, something of very great importance happens to the man who is about to reënter physical existence.

In his former life he created disturbing forces, which were revealed to him on the journey retraced after death. Let us again take an example. He caused some one pain in an outburst of anger in the fortieth year of his former life. After death, the other's pain came before him as a force which had interfered with the evolution of his ego. It is similarly so with all such events of his former life. On his reëntrance into physical life these hindrances to his evolution confront the ego anew. As, on the threshold of death, a sort of memory-picture rose up before

the human ego, so does there now arise a vision of the life approaching. Again he sees a picture, this time showing all the obstacles which he has to clear away, if he is to advance in evolution. And what he thus sees becomes the starting-point for forces which he must bring with him into his new life. The picture of the pain he has caused the other man becomes a force which impels the ego, on entering life again, to make amends for this pain. Thus the previous life has a determining effect on the new one. The deeds of the new life are in a certain way caused by those of the former life. This connection, following a law, between an earlier and later existence is to be looked upon as the "Law of Destiny"; it has become usual to designate it "Karma," a term borrowed from oriental wisdom.

The building up of a new set of bodies, however, is not the only task incumbent upon man between death and a new birth. While this building up is taking place, man lives outside the physical world. That world, however, continues to evolve during this time. The surface of the earth changes in comparatively short periods of time. What aspect did those regions which are now occupied by Germany bear a few thousand years ago? When man appears on earth in a new existence, the earth rarely looks the same as it did at the time of his last incarnation. During his absence from the earth all sorts of changes have occurred. Now

hidden forces are also at work in this alteration of the face of the earth, acting from that very world in which man finds himself after death; and he himself must coöperate with these forces in the transformation of the earth. He can do so only under the direction of Higher Beings until, by the creation of his Life-Spirit and Spirit-Man, he has acquired a clear perception of the connection between the spiritual and its expression in the physical. But he takes part in the transformation of earthly conditions. It may be said that during the period between death and a new birth, man so transforms the earth that its conditions are in keeping with what he has evolved in himself. If we look at a given place on the earth at a definite moment, and see it again after a long lapse of time, under entirely changed conditions, the forces which have wrought the change have proceeded from those who are now dead. And it is this kind of connection which exists between them and the earth until the time of rebirth.

Clairvoyant observation sees in all physical existence the manifestation of a hidden spiritual element. To physical observation it is the light of the sun, climatic changes, and so on, that effect the transformation of the earth, but to clairvoyance it is the force of the dead that acts in the ray of light which falls on the plant from the sun. The clairvoyant sees how human souls

hover about plants, how they change the surface of the earth. Not only on himself, not only on the preparations for his own new earthly existence, is man's attention bestowed after death,—no, he is called upon then to work upon the outer world, just as he is in life between the time of his birth and death.

Not only does the life of man affect the conditions of the physical world from spirit-land; but, vice versa, activity during physical existence has its effects in the spiritual world. An example may explain what happens in this respect. A bond of love exists between mother and child. This love arises from a mutual attraction caused by the forces of the sense-world. But in the course of time it changes. A spiritual tie gradually grows out of the sense-bond, and this spiritual tie is not created for the physical world only but for the spirit-world as well. The same applies to other ties. Whatever is created in the physical world by spiritual entities continues to exist in the spiritual world. Friends who were closely united in life belong to each other in spirit-land also, and when their bodies are laid aside they are in much more intimate communion than during physical life. For as spirits they exist for each other in the same way as, in the above description, spiritual beings reveal themselves to others by inner manifestation; and a tie created between two persons brings them

together again in a new life. Thus in the truest sense of the word we may speak of finding one another again after death.

What has once happened to a man between birth and death and from then till a new birth, repeats itself. Man returns to earth again and again when the fruit he has earned in a physical life has ripened in the spirit-world. It is not, however, a case of repetition without beginning or end; but man has once passed out of different forms of existence into those which run their course in the manner just described, and he will again in the future pass into other forms. An outlook on these transition stages will be gained when the evolution of the universe in connection with man is subsequently dealt with from the standpoint of occult science.

The occurrences between death and a new birth are of course still more concealed from outer sense-observation than is the spiritual foundation underlying manifested life between birth and death. This sense-observation can see only the effects of that portion of the hidden world where they impinge upon physical existence. With regard to this the question must arise whether man, on entering this life at birth, brings with him any results from the events described by occult science as having taken place between his last death and his birth. If one finds the shell of a snail in which there is no

trace of the animal he will, in spite of that, recognize that this snailshell was formed by the activity of an animal, and he cannot believe that the shell constructed a form for itself, by means of mere physical forces. In the same way one who studies a man during life, and finds something in him which cannot be due to *this* life, may reasonably admit that it arises from what occult science describes, if by so doing an explanatory light is thrown on what is otherwise inexplicable.

Here, too, the unseen causes might appear intelligible to rational sense-observation from their visible effects, and whoever observes life with absolute impartiality will find that, with every fresh observation, this appears more and more to be the truth. The important question, however, is how to find the right point of view from which to observe the workings in life. Where, for example, are the effects to be found of what occult science describes as incidents of the time of purification? How are the effects of the experience which, according to occult investigations, man undergoes in purely spiritual regions, manifested after this time of purification?

Problems enough press upon every serious and profound student of life in this domain. We see one man born in want and misery, endowed only with inferior abilities, so that on account of these facts, which are incident to his birth, he appears predestined to a miserable existence.

Another, from the first moment of his life, is tended and cherished by loving hands and hearts; brilliant talents are unfolded in him; his gifts point to a successful and satisfactory career. Two opposite views may be taken when met by such questions as these. The one will adhere to what the senses perceive and what the understanding, relying on these senses, is able to comprehend. This view will admit no problem in the fact that one man is born fortunate and the other unfortunate. Even if the word "chance" is not used, there will be no question of thinking that such things are brought about through any law of cause and effect. Also with regard to talents and abilities, such a view will consider them as "inherited" from parents, grandparents, and other ancestors. It would refuse to seek the causes in spiritual events which the man himself met with before birth—apart from the line of heredity from his ancestors—and by means of which he formed his talents and abilities.

Another view would find no satisfaction in such an interpretation. It would assert that even in the manifested world nothing happens in a definite place or in definite surroundings without our having to presuppose causes for the event in question. Even though in many cases such causes have not yet been investigated, they are there. An Alpine flower does not grow in the lowlands. Its nature has something which

associates it with Alpine regions. Just so must there be something in a man which determines his birth in a certain environment. Causes belonging to the physical world alone are not sufficient to account for this. To a more profound thinker such an explanation would be much the same as if the fact of some one having given another a blow should be attributed not to the feelings of the former, but to the physical mechanism of his hand.

Just as unsatisfactory would any explanation of abilities and talents solely by "heredity" appear to such a view. It is true one may say: "See how certain talents are inherited in families." During two and a half centuries musical talents were inherited by members of the Bach family. Eight mathematicians sprang from the Bernoulli family, to some of whom quite different occupations were assigned in their childhood; but the inherited talents always drove them to the family vocation. It may be further pointed out how, by an exact investigation of the line of ancestry of a personality, it can be shown that in one way or another the gifts of this personality have shown themselves in the forefathers, and only represent the sum of inherited talents. Whoever holds the latter of the two views above indicated will be sure not to let such facts pass unnoticed, but *to him* they cannot mean the same as they do to one who relies for his interpretation on

the events of the world of sense alone. The former will point out that inherited talents can of themselves no more combine into a complete personality than can the metal portions of a watch fit themselves together. And if it is objected that the coöperation of the parents may doubtless produce the combination of talents,—that this takes, as it were, the place of the watchmaker,—he will reply: "Look impartially at what is new in every child-personality, that which is absolutely new: that cannot come from the parents, for the simple reason that it does not exist in them."

Inaccurate thinking may create much confusion in this domain. Worst of all is it when those who hold the second view are set down by the supporters of the first as opponents of what is, after all, borne out by "ascertained facts." But it may well be that the latter have not the slightest intention of denying the truth or value of those facts. For instance, they see that a definite mental aptitude or predisposition is "inherited" in a family, and that certain gifts accumulated and combined in one descendant result in a remarkable personality. They are perfectly willing to acquiesce when it is said that the most celebrated name seldom stands at the top, but at the bottom, of a line of descent. But it should not be taken amiss if they are compelled to form very different opinions on the subject from those of people who are determined

to accept nothing but material evidence. To the latter it may be said that it is true a man shows the characteristics of his ancestors, for the "spirit-soul" which enters upon physical existence at birth draws its bodily substance from that which heredity bestows on it. But this is only to say that a being already possesses in his own nature the characteristics of the medium into which he has descended.

It is no doubt a singular—a trivial—comparison, but the unprejudiced person will not deny its validity if it is said that the fact that a human being turns out to be imbued with the qualities of his forefathers proves the origin of the personal qualities of the individual just as little as the fact that a man is wet because he has fallen into the water proves something regarding his inner nature. And it may further be said that if the most celebrated name stands at the bottom of a line of family descent, it shows that the bearer of that name needed that particular ancestry to build the body necessary for the expression of his whole personality. But it is no proof that his actual personal qualities were transmitted to him: such a statement is, on the contrary, opposed to sound logic. If personal gifts were inherited, they would be found at the beginning of a line of descent,¹ and

¹The assertion that a man's personal talents, if governed purely by the law of "heredity," must show themselves at the beginning of a line of descent, not at its end, might of course easily be misunderstood.

starting from that point be transmitted to the descendants. As, however, they stand at the end, it is evident that they are *not* transmitted.

Now it is not to be denied that those who speak of a spiritual causality in life have contributed no less to bringing about confusion of thought. Far too much generalizing and vague discussion comes from this quarter. To say that a man's personality is a combination of inherited characteristics may certainly be compared with the assertion that the metal parts of a watch have fitted themselves together. It must also be admitted that, with regard to many assertions about a spiritual world, it is as though some one said that the metal parts of a watch cannot put themselves together in such a way as to enable the hands to move forward; some intelligence must therefore be present to effect this forward movement. In face of such an assertion, *he* certainly builds on a far better foundation who says: "Oh! I care nothing for your 'mystic' beings who move the hands on. What I want to know is the mechanical construction by means of which the forward movement of the hands is achieved." It is by no

It might be said, indeed, that they could not show themselves then, for they must first be developed. But this is no objection; for if we wish to prove that something has been inherited from an ancestor, we must show how that which was there before is repeated in a descendant. Now if it were demonstrated that something existed at the beginning of a genealogical line which reappeared in its further course, we might speak of heredity. We cannot do so when something appears at the end of it which was not there before. The reversal of the above proposition is only to show that the belief in heredity is impossible.

means a question of merely knowing that behind a mechanism, for example a watch, there is an intelligence (the watchmaker); it can only be of importance to know the ideas in the watchmaker's mind which preceded the construction of the watch. These thoughts may be rediscovered in the mechanism.

Mere dreaming and imagining about the supersensual only result in confusion, for they are not calculated to satisfy opponents. The latter are right in saying that such general allusions to superphysical beings are not at all conducive to an understanding of facts. Of course, such opponents might also say the same of the *exact* statements of occult science. But, in that case, it may be pointed out that the effects of hidden spiritual causes are seen in manifested life. Let us assume for the moment that what occult science asserts to be proved by observation is correct,—that man has gone through a time of purification after death, and during this period has experienced in his soul how a certain deed performed by him in a former life was a hindrance to his progressive evolution. While he was undergoing this experience, the impulse arose in him to make amends for that deed. He brings this impulse with him into a new life, and its presence produces a tendency in his nature which draws him into conditions rendering the amendment possible. Taking into consideration a number of such

impulses, we have the cause for a man's being born into an environment corresponding to his destiny.

We may deal in the same way with another assumption. Let us again accept as correct the assertion of occult science that the fruits of a past life are incorporated in man's spiritual germ, and that the spirit-land in which man finds himself, between death and a new life, is the region in which these fruits ripen, and are transformed into talents and capabilities which will appear in a new life and will form the personality so that it appears as the effect of what was gained in a former life. It will become evident to any one who accepts these hypotheses and, bearing them in mind, surveys life impartially, that while, by their means, all material facts may be appreciated in their full truth and significance, at the same time everything becomes intelligible which, if merely material facts were relied upon, must forever remain incomprehensible to one whose attention is fixed on the spiritual world. And, more important still, there will vanish that illogical reasoning of the kind indicated above,—that because the most distinguished name in a line of descent stands at the end of it, its bearer must have inherited his gifts. Life becomes logically comprehensible through the supersensual facts ascertained by occult science.

But yet another weighty objection may be

raised by the conscientious seeker after truth who desires to find his way to facts and has no experience of his own in the supersensual world. It may be urged that it is inadmissible to accept the existence of facts, of any kind, simply because by means of them something may be explained which is otherwise unintelligible. Such an objection is meaningless to one who knows the corresponding facts from supersensual experience, and in later chapters of this book will be indicated the path that may be followed in order to gain knowledge not only of the spiritual facts herein described, but also of the law of spiritual causation as a personal experience. Any one, however, who is not willing to enter upon this path may find the above objection important; and what can be said against it is also of value to one who is resolved to follow the path indicated. For if it is received in the right spirit, it is the very best preliminary step that can be taken on this path. It is perfectly true that one ought not to accept a statement about which one is otherwise ignorant merely because, by means of it, something otherwise inexplicable can be explained, but in the case of alleged spiritual facts the matter is different. If the statements are accepted, the intellectual consequence is not only that, by their means, life becomes intelligible, but that through admitting these hypotheses into the thought-world, experiences of quite a new kind are induced.

Take the following case. Something befalls a man which causes him extremely painful sensations. He may meet the situation in one of two ways. He may submit to the occurrence as something affecting him painfully, and abandon himself to the painful sensation, even becoming absorbed in his grief; or he may meet it in another way. He may say: "It is really I myself who in a former life set the force in motion which has brought me into contact with this thing. I have really brought it on myself." He may then awaken in himself all the feelings which such a thought brings in its train. It goes without saying that the thought must be entertained with perfect seriousness, and with the utmost possible force, if it is to have such consequences in the life of sensation and feeling. One who succeeds in this will meet with an experience which may be best illustrated by a comparison. Let us suppose that two men have each a stick of sealing wax in his hand. One begins reflecting about its inner nature. These reflections may perhaps be very wise, but if the "inner nature" did not show itself in any way, some one might easily retort: "That is all imagination." The other, however, rubs the sealing wax with a woollen rag, and then shows that it attracts small particles. There is an important difference between the thoughts which have passed through the first man's head and prompted his reflections, and

those of the second. The thoughts of the first man had no actual result; those of the second have called out a hidden force, consequently something real.

The same thing happens with regard to the thoughts of a man in whose mind the idea arises that in a former life he has set going within himself the force which causes him to meet with a certain event. The mere conception of this stirs up strength within him which enables him to face the event in quite a different manner from that in which he would have met it without entertaining such an idea. It dawns upon him that an event which he would otherwise have looked upon as an accident was really a necessity, and the perception will flash upon him: "My thought was the right one, for it had the power of revealing a truth to me." If such inner processes are repeated they will grow into a source of inward power and thus prove their truth by their fruitfulness; and little by little, this truth is found to be powerfully effective. Such processes have a salutary effect on body, soul, and spirit,—nay, they help life forward in every way. The man becomes aware that in this manner he takes the right position with regard to life's continuity; whereas, by taking into consideration only the one life between birth and death, he is the victim of a delusion.

Such an entirely inward proof of spiritual

causation can of course be acquired only by each one for himself, in his own inner life. But it is in every one's power to have it. Those who have not acquired it certainly cannot judge of its convincing force; but those who have acquired it can scarcely have any further doubt in the matter. And there is no reason for surprise that this should be so. It is only natural that what is so wholly bound up with the constitution of man's inmost being and personality can be adequately proved only by inner experience. On the other hand, it cannot be alleged that because such a matter corresponds to inner experience it must therefore be settled by every one for himself, and that it is no subject for occult science. Certain it is that every one must undergo the experience for himself, just as each must see for himself the proof of a mathematical problem. But the path by which such an experience may be gained is open to all, just as the method of proving a mathematical problem is available for every one.

It is not to be denied that, apart, of course, from clairvoyant observation, the only proof which can hold its own against unprejudiced logic is the one just cited of the power of right thinking to engender force. All other considerations are no doubt very important, but in all of them there will be something on which an opponent might seize as a point of attack. Surely one who has acquired a fairly impartial way of looking at

things will find something in the possibility and actual fact of man's education, which has the power of logical proof that a spiritual being is struggling for existence within the sheath of the body. He will compare animals with man and say to himself that at the birth of the former there appear certain definite qualities and capacities as something, decisive in itself, which plainly shows how it has been designed by heredity and will evolve in the outer world. We see how a young chicken carries out life's functions in the appointed way from its birth; but by means of education something comes into touch with man's inner life which is independent of any connection with his heredity, and he may be in a position to assimilate the effects of such external influences. The educator knows that such influences are met by forces coming from the man's inner nature. If this is not the case all instruction and training are meaningless. The unprejudiced educator finds the boundary line between inherited talents and those inner forces of the man himself which shine through them and originate in former lives, to be very sharply marked. It is true we cannot bring forward such weighty proofs for things of this kind as we can for certain physical facts, by means of scales; but then these are just the intimate things of life, and one who has the power to appreciate such impalpable proofs will find them convincing—even more convincing than palpable reality.

That animals may be trained, and thus, to a certain extent, acquire qualities and capacities by education, is no objection to him who is able to see reality, for apart from the fact that transitional stages are met with all over the world, the results of training an animal by no means fade away with its individual existence, as is the case with a man. What is more, the fact has been emphasized that faculties acquired by domestic animals through intercourse with man are transmitted, that is to say, continue in the species, not in the individual. Darwin describes how dogs fetch and carry without having been taught to do so, or without having seen it done. Who would make such an assertion with regard to human education?

Now there are thinkers whose observations have led them beyond the opinion that a man is built by purely inherited forces from without. They rise to the thought that a spiritual being, an individuality, exists before life in the body, and fashions it; but many of them find it impossible to conceive that there are repeated earthly lives, and that the fruits of former lives are moulding forces during the intermediate state between two lives. Let us take one instance from among the ranks of these thinkers. Immanuel Hermann Fichte, son of the great Fichte, in his *Anthropology* (p. 528) gives the observations which led him to the following conclusion:

“Parents are *not* generators in the full sense of the word. They supply organic substance, and not alone this, but also that intermediate element of the senses and mental nature which appears in temperament, colouring of character, definite tendencies, and so on, the common source of which proves to be ‘imagination’ in the wider sense indicated by us. In all these elements of personality, the mingling and particular combination of the souls of the parents is unmistakable; it is therefore a perfectly well-grounded assertion that this combination is simply the result of procreation, even if we regard procreation, as we must do, as really a soul-process. But the real ultimate centre of the personality is just what is lacking here; for a deeper and more searching observation reveals the fact that even those peculiarities of disposition are but a covering and an instrument for containing the individual’s really spiritual and ideal capabilities, qualified to aid these in their development or to hinder them, but in no wise able to originate them.” It is further stated in the same work (p. 532): “Every individual preexists as regards the fundamental form of his spirit, for no individual, from a spiritual point of view, resembles another, just as no species of animal resembles another species.”

These thoughts reach only far enough to allow of a spiritual being within the physical body; but as the forces shaping such a being are not

derived from causes existing in former lives, it would be necessary that, each time a fresh personality appears, a spiritual being should come forth from a Divine First Cause. With this hypothesis there would be no possibility of explaining the relationship which certainly exists between the potentialities struggling out of man's innermost being, and that which is forcing its way thither from his outer earthly environment in the course of his life. Man's innermost being, issuing in the case of each single person from a Divine First Cause, would find what confronts him in earthly life quite strange and foreign. Only then could this not be the case—as, in fact, it is not—if there had already been a connection between the inner man and the outer world, only if the inner man were not now living in it for the first time.

The unprejudiced educator may undoubtedly observe: "I am bringing my pupil something out of the results of earthly life, which is certainly alien to his purely inherited qualities, but which yet gives him the impression that the work, out of which the results arise, had been done by him in the past." Only repeated lives on earth, in conjunction with the facts set forth by occult science as taking place in spiritual regions between two earthly lives,—only this view can afford a satisfactory explanation of present human life looked at from every side. I say expressly "present"

human life, for occult investigation shows that the cycle of earthly life certainly had a beginning, and that then man's spiritual being, which entered a bodily frame, existed under different conditions. In the following chapter we shall go back to this primeval condition of human existence. When it has been shown, from the reports of occult science how human beings received their present form in connection with the evolution of the earth, it will also be possible to indicate more precisely how the spiritual germ of man's being descends from superphysical worlds into a bodily form, and how the spiritual law of causation, or "human destiny," is developed.

CHAPTER IV

THE EVOLUTION OF THE WORLD AND MAN

FROM the foregoing observations it will be seen that man's being is built up of four principles: the physical body, the etheric body, the astral body, and the vehicle of the ego. The ego works within the three other principles, and transforms them. By means of this transformation there are formed, on a lower level, the sentient soul, the rational or intellectual soul, and the self-conscious soul; on a higher level, the Spirit-Self, the Life-Spirit, and the Spirit-Man. The relations existing between these human principles and the whole universe are of the most varied character; and the evolution of the principles is bound up with that of the universe. By studying the latter evolution an insight is obtained into the deeper mysteries of man's being.

It is clear that human life is connected in the most widely different directions with the environment or dwelling place in which it is developed. Physical science, through the facts presented to it, has already been driven to the opinion that the earth itself, man's dwelling place in the widest sense of the word, has undergone evolution. Science points to former conditions of the earth's history when man, in his present form, did not

yet exist on our planet; it shows how man has slowly and gradually evolved to his present condition from primitive states of civilization. *Physical science, therefore, comes also to the conclusion that there is a connection between man's evolution and that of the heavenly body on which he lives—the earth.*

Occult science traces this connection by means of that knowledge which obtains its data from observation quickened by spiritual organs of perception. It traces man backwards in his course of development, and the fact becomes evident to occult science that the real inner spiritual being of man has progressed through a series of lives on this earth. But occult research arrives in this way at an epoch far back in the remote past, when for the first time that inner being of man made its entry into "external life" as at present understood. It was in this first earthly incarnation that the ego began to function in the three bodies,—the astral body, etheric or vital body, and physical body; and it thereupon carried over the results of that activity into its next life.

If in our investigation we proceed backwards, in the manner indicated, as far as that epoch, we shall discover that the ego lights upon a condition of the earth in which the three bodies, physical, etheric, and astral, are already developed and bear a certain relation to each other.

The ego is, for the first time, united with the being composed of these three bodies; and henceforward takes part in the further evolution of the three bodies. Hitherto, up to the stage at which that ego came into touch with them, they had evolved without a human ego.

Occult science must now go back still farther in its researches if it is to answer the questions, "How did the three bodies reach that stage of evolution at which they were able to receive an ego within them?" and "How did that ego itself come into being and acquire the capacity for working within these bodies?"

It is possible to answer these questions only when the gradual development of the earth-planet itself is studied from the occult point of view. By such investigation we arrive at a beginning of the earth-planet. That method of examination which is based only on the facts of the physical senses cannot arrive at conclusions concerning the beginning of the earth. A certain point of view which avails itself of such conclusions arrives at the result that everything material on the earth was formed out of a primeval essence, or vapour. It is not the purpose of this work to enter more fully into such conceptions of our planet's origin; for in occult science the important matter is not merely to inquire into the material processes of the earth's evolution, but first and foremost to discover the

spiritual causes lying behind what is material.

If we see before us a man raising his hand, we may consider his action in two different ways: we may examine the mechanism of the arm and of the rest of the organism, in order to describe the process as it takes place from the purely physical standpoint, or we may direct the spiritual vision to what takes place in the man's soul and constitutes the inner motive of the raising of the hand. In this way the investigator, trained in occult research, sees spiritual processes behind all the events of the physical sense-world. In his eyes all transformations of the material part of the earth-planet are manifestations of spiritual forces lying behind what is material.

But if occult observation of this kind goes farther and farther back in the life of the earth it comes to that point in evolution at which material things first came into being. The material element is evolved out of the spiritual. Up to this point the spiritual element was the only one existing. By occult investigation the spiritual element is perceived, and the observer can see how it becomes partly condensed, as it were, into matter. We have before us a process which is taking place—on a higher level—much as though we were observing a lump of ice being formed by artificial means in a vessel of water. Just as we see the ice being condensed out of what was previously only water, so may we,

by means of occult observation, watch the condensation, so to speak, of material things, processes, and beings, out of what was previously entirely spiritual. In this way the physical earth-planet was evolved out of a cosmic essence; and everything that is combined materially with the earth-planet has been condensed out of what was previously united with it spiritually. We must not, however, think that *everything* spiritual was at any one time changed into material form; but, in the latter we have before us merely the transmuted portions of what was originally spiritual. Thus, even during the period of material evolution, it is always Spirit that is really the leading and governing principle.

It is obvious that the mode of thought which restricts itself to the processes of physical sense—and to what reason is able to infer from them—cannot express an opinion about the spiritual element of which we are speaking. Let us assume that a being might exist to whose senses ice would be perceptible, but not the finer condition of water, from which ice is detached by refrigeration. For such a being, water would be non-existent, and could become visible only when parts of it had been transformed into ice. In the same way, the spiritual element behind earthly processes remains hidden from a man who will admit the existence only of what his physical senses can recognize. And if, from

the physical facts he now perceives, he wishes to draw correct conclusions about earlier conditions of the earth-planet, he can get only so far as that point in evolution at which what was previously spiritual was partially condensed into material substance. Such a method of observation no more discovers the spiritual element previously existing, than it perceives the spiritual life which even now rules unseen behind that which is material.

Not until we come to the later chapters of this work can we deal with those methods by which man acquires the faculty of looking back, by means of occult perception, upon those earlier conditions of the earth which are now under discussion. For the present we shall merely intimate that the facts concerning the primeval past have not passed beyond the reach of occult research. If a being comes into corporeal existence his material part perishes after physical death. But not thus do the spiritual forces, which called the bodily part into being from out of themselves, "disappear." They leave behind them their traces, their exact copies, in the spiritual foundations of the world. And any one who is able to raise his perceptive faculty through the visible to the invisible world, attains at length a level on which he may see before him what may be compared to a vast spiritual panorama, in which are recorded all the past events

of the world's history. These imperishable traces of everything beyond the realm of matter are called in occult science the "Âkâshic Records."

Here it must once more be repeated that investigations of the supersensible spheres can be carried on only with the aid of spiritual perception, and consequently can be instituted only in the sphere now under consideration, by reading the Âkâshic Records above-mentioned. Nevertheless, what was said earlier in this book in a similar instance holds good here. Supersensible facts are only to be investigated by supersensible perceptions; but once investigated and communicated by occult science, they may be grasped by the ordinary powers of thought, if these are honestly exercised without bias. In the following pages the various conditions of the earth's evolution, as given by occult science, will be detailed. The transformations of our planet will be traced down to the conditions of life in which we now find it. Any one who surveys what comes before him at the present time merely through the evidence of his senses, and then lends an ear to what occult science has to say on the subject, namely, how that which now lies before him has been evolved from a far distant past, will be able, if his thought is genuinely unbiassed, to say to himself: "In the first place, what occult science reports is quite logical; in the second place, I can, if I assume

the reports of occult investigation to be correct, understand how things have become as they now appear." By "logical" is not meant, of course, in this connection, that errors might not be made from a logical standpoint in some description given by occult research. We are here speaking of "logic" as it is understood in the ordinary life of the physical world. Just as a logical demonstration is there accepted as would be one of physical research, even though a single investigator, in a certain domain of facts, may make illogical statements, so also is it in occult science. It may even happen that an investigator who possesses the power of vision in supersensible spheres may make mistakes in a reasoned presentment of them, and may be corrected by another who has no supersensible perception, but has, none the less, a capacity for sound thinking. In reality, nothing of any weight can be said against the logical deductions of occult science. And it ought to be unnecessary to insist that nothing can be adduced, on purely logical grounds, against the facts themselves. In the domain of the physical world it can never be proved by logic, but only by ocular demonstration, whether or no there is such an animal as a whale; similarly, supersensible facts can be known only through occult perception.

But it cannot be sufficiently emphasized that an obligation is laid upon the explorer of

supersensible regions, before he determines to approach the invisible worlds in his own consciousness, to acquire first of all the aforementioned logical faculty, and this is none the less essential if he admits that the world manifest to his senses will become comprehensible if he accepts the communications of occult science as correct. All experiences in the supersensible world are nothing but an uncertain—nay, a dangerous—groping in the dark if we despise the method of preparation which has been described. Therefore in this book the facts concerning the supersensible processes of the earth's evolution will first be given, before the path leading to the attainment of supersensible knowledge is dealt with.

We have also, it is true, to take into account that the man who, by sheer thinking, comes to accept what supersensible research has to impart, is by no means in the same position as one who listens to the account of a physical occurrence which he is unable to see. For thinking is in itself a supersensible activity. When relating to the senses, it cannot of itself lead to supersensible happenings. But if thought is directed to supersensible matters through the accounts given of them by occult science, it grows by its own activity into the supersensible world. What is more, one of the very best ways of acquiring individual perception in supersensible spheres is to grow into the higher worlds by meditation

upon what has been communicated by occult science. That is to say, such a mode of entry insures the greatest clearness of results. For this reason such thinking is regarded by a certain section of occult investigators as the most valuable first step to take in occult training.

It will be readily understood that it is impossible to mention in this book all the details of the earth's evolution, as it has been spiritually perceived by occultists, in order to illustrate the way in which the supersensible world is reflected in the manifested one. Nor was this what was intended when it was said that the unseen may everywhere be demonstrated by its manifested effects. Rather was it meant that everything that man encounters may, step by step, become clear and comprehensible if he brings manifested events into the illumination of occult science. Only in a few characteristic instances will reference be made in the following pages to confirmations of the invisible by the manifest, in order to show that this may be done everywhere in the course of practical life, if desired.

* * *

Following the evolution of the earth backward by the method of occult research mentioned above, we arrive at a spiritual condition (Pralaya) of our planet. But if we go farther back along this path of research we find that that spiritual substance had previously been in a kind of

physical incarnation. Thus we come upon a bygone physical planetary condition, which was afterwards spiritualized, and subsequently transformed into our earth by repeated materialization. Our earth is therefore presented to us as the reincarnation of a very ancient planet. But occult science can go back still farther; and then it finds the whole process twice repeated. Our earth has, therefore, passed through three previous planetary states, between which lie intermediate states of spirituality. The physical substance, of course, proves to be finer and finer the farther back we follow the incarnations.

Now man, in the form in which he is at present evolving, makes his first appearance during the fourth of the planetary incarnations which have been described, on the earth proper. And the essential characteristic of his form is that it is composed of four principles, the physical, etheric, and astral bodies and the ego. But that form could not have appeared if it had not been prepared by the preceding events of evolution. The method of preparation was that, in the earlier planetary incarnation, beings were evolved who already had three of the present four principles of man: the physical, etheric, and astral bodies. These beings who, in a certain sense, may be called man's ancestors, had as yet no ego, but they developed the three other principles and the connection between them to such a point that

they became sufficiently mature to receive an ego. Consequently, man's ancestor attained to a certain degree of maturity of his three principles during the earlier planetary incarnation.

This state passed into spirituality; and out of the spirituality was formed a new planetary condition, in which man's matured ancestors were contained, as it were, in embryo. Because the whole planet had passed through a process of spiritualization and had appeared in a new form, it offered those embryos, with their physical, etheric, and astral bodies, which were contained within it, not only the opportunity of again evolving up to the level on which they had previously stood, but the further possibility, after having arrived at that level, of reaching out beyond themselves through receiving the ego.

The evolution of the earth falls, therefore, into two parts. During the first period the earth itself appears as a reincarnation of the previous planetary state. But that recurring state is a higher one than that of the previous incarnation, in consequence of the intervening period of spiritualization. And the earth contains within itself the germs of man's ancestors belonging to the earlier planet. These were first developed up to the level they had previously reached. The attainment of this level marks the end of the first period. But now, owing to its own higher stage of evolution, the earth is able to carry the germs still

higher, that is, to qualify them for receiving the ego. The second period of the earth's evolution is that of the development of the ego in the physical, etheric, and astral bodies.

In the same way that man was thus carried a stage farther by the evolution of the earth, this had been the case during the earlier planetary incarnations. For man had in some measure existed as early as the first of these. Light is therefore thrown on the present constitution of man if his evolution is followed back to the far-remote past of the first of the planetary incarnations mentioned above.

In occult science the first of these is called "Saturn"; the second is termed "Sun"; the third, "Moon"; and the fourth is the earth. It must be distinctly understood that these occult terms are not at first to be in any way associated with the names used to designate the members of the present solar system.¹ In occult science Saturn,

¹ In different chapters of this book it has been shown how the world of humanity, and man himself, pass, in their progressive evolution, through conditions which have been named Saturn, Sun, Moon, earth, Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan. The relationship has also been indicated in which human evolution stands with regard to the celestial bodies which exist besides the earth and which are called Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and so on. These latter planets are also passing through their evolution in the natural way. At the present period they have reached such a stage that their physical portions are seen as those bodies which physical astronomy calls Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and so on. Now when the Saturn of the present day is observed by occultism it is seen to be, in a certain sense, a reincarnation of the old Saturn. It has come into existence because of the presence of certain beings, who before the separation of the Sun from the earth were unable, like the others, to leave with the Sun. The reason of this was that they had gained so many qualities which are suitable for a Saturn existence, that their place could not be where the qualities of the Sun were specially

Sun, and Moon are merely names for bygone forms of evolution through which the earth has passed. In the course of the following account it will be shown what relation these worlds of remote antiquity bear to the celestial bodies composing the present solar system.

If the conditions of the four planetary incarnations named are now to be described, they can only be outlined briefly; for the events, the beings, and the destiny of those beings on Saturn, Sun, and Moon are in truth just as varied as they are on the earth itself. Therefore only a few characteristic details as to the prevailing conditions can be selected for description, for the purpose of illustrating the manner in which the earth's conditions have been evolved out of its earlier forms. It must also be borne in mind, in this connection, that those conditions are seen to be more and more different from present-day conditions the farther back we go. And yet they are only to be described, as to their main characteristics, by

unfolded. The Jupiter of the present, however, arose in consequence of the presence of beings possessed of qualities which can only be matured on the future Jupiter of the whole evolution. A dwelling place appeared for them on which they can already begin in anticipation this later evolution.

In the same way Mars is a planetary body on which dwell beings whose lunar evolution was such that further progress on the earth could bring them nothing. Mars is a reincarnation of the old Moon at a higher stage. The present Mercury is the dwelling place of beings who are beyond the evolution of the earth; but this is just because they have developed certain qualities in a higher way than is possible on the earth itself. The present Venus is a prophetic anticipation of the future Venus condition of a similar kind. It is consequently justifiable to give to the conditions preceding and following the earth the names of their corresponding representatives in the universe.

making use of ideas borrowed from existing conditions of the earth. If, for instance, light, heat, or the like is mentioned in connection with these earlier conditions, it must not be overlooked that they are not exactly the same as what we now term light and heat. And yet such terminology is accurate, for to the clairvoyant observer of earlier stages of evolution something becomes manifest out of which have come the light and heat of the present time. And one who follows the descriptions thus given by occult science will be well able to infer, from the connection in which these matters are placed, what ideas have to be adopted in order to get characteristic images and similes of events enacted in a primeval past.

Of course there will be considerable difficulty in treating of those planetary conditions which preceded the Moon incarnation. For during the latter, conditions prevailed which bore at any rate some resemblance to earthly conditions. One attempting to describe these conditions finds that such resemblances to the present time form a certain basis on which he may clearly represent the observations he has made through clairvoyance. It is another thing if the Saturn and Sun evolutions are to be described. In that case, what lies before clairvoyant observation is utterly different from the objects and beings now belonging to the sphere of human life. And this difference makes it exceedingly difficult to bring the

corresponding facts of primeval times within the the scope of clairvoyant consciousness.

Yet as the present constitution of man cannot be understood without going back to the Saturn state, the description must nevertheless be given. And surely no one will misunderstand such a description who keeps in view the existence of the difficulty, and the fact that owing to it much that is said must be in the nature of a suggestion or hint of the facts in question, rather than an exact description of them.

* * *

The physical body is the oldest of the present four principles of man's being. It is also the one, which, in its way, has attained the greatest perfection. Occult research shows that this part of man already existed during the Saturn evolution. It will be shown in the following account that the form taken by the physical body on Saturn was, of course, something quite different from the present physical body of man. The earthly physical human body, from its nature, can only exist by being in connection with the etheric and astral bodies and the ego, in the manner described earlier in this book. Such a connection did not as yet exist on Saturn. The physical body was then passing through the first stage of its evolution, without having a human etheric body, astral body, or ego incorporated with it.

During the Saturn evolution it was growing

ripe for the reception of an etheric body. For that purpose Saturn had first to pass into a spiritual condition, and then to be reincarnated as Sun. During the Sun incarnation the physical body was developed again, as if from a germ left behind, to the point it had reached on Saturn; and then only could it be interpenetrated by an etheric body. By means of this incorporation of an etheric body, a change took place in the nature of the physical body; it was raised to a second stage of perfection. A similar thing took place during the Moon evolution. Man's ancestor, at the point to which he had developed when passing from the Sun to the Moon, incorporated within himself the astral body. By this means the physical body was changed for the third time, and thus raised to its third stage of perfection; at the same time the etheric body was likewise changed, and passed to its second stage of perfection. On the earth the ego was incorporated with man's ancestor, composed of the physical, etheric, and astral bodies. Thereby the physical body reached its fourth stage of perfection, the etheric body its third, and the astral body its second stage; the ego is only now at the first stage of its existence.

If we give ourselves up to an unprejudiced examination of man's nature, there will be no difficulty in drawing an accurate picture of these several stages of perfection of his individual

principles. In this connection we have merely to compare the physical with the astral body. It is true, the astral body, as a psychic principle, stands on a higher level of evolution than the physical body. And in future ages, when the former has been perfected, it will be of very much more consequence to man's complete being than the present physical body. Yet, in its own way, the latter has reached a certain degree of perfection. Consider the marvellous wisdom with which the structure of the heart is planned, the amazing structure of the brain,---nay, even of part of a single bone, such as the upper end of a thigh bone. In the end of this bone we find a network or scaffolding, wonderfully constructed and adjusted out of delicate little bars. The whole is so arranged that with the least expenditure of material substance the most effective action on the joint-surfaces is obtained---the most judicious distribution of friction and thence a proper freedom of movement. Similarly, wise contrivances are found in other parts of the physical body. And if we go on to observe the harmonious coöperation of the parts with the whole we shall find that it is certainly true that this principle of man's being is, in its way, perfect. Moreover, it does not affect the question that in certain parts something apparently useless appears, or that disturbances of structure or functions may take place. It will even be found that such

disturbances are the necessary shadows of the wisdom-filled light which is poured forth over the whole physical organism.

• And now compare with this the astral body as the medium, or vehicle, of pleasure and pain, desires and passions. What uncertainty rules in it with regard to pleasure and pain; how the desires and passions of which it is the scene run counter to the higher goal of man; how senseless they often are. The astral body is only now on its way to attain the harmony and inner self-control already possessed by the physical body. Similarly it might be shown that the etheric body is certainly more perfect in its own way than the astral but less perfect than the physical body. And it will equally result from a corresponding study of the ego that this, the real kernel of man's being, is now only at the beginning of its evolution. For how much has hitherto been accomplished of its mission, which is so to transform the other principles of man's being that they shall become a revelation of the ego's own nature?

The result of an outer examination of this kind is intensified for the occult student by something else. It might be pointed out that the physical body is attacked by diseases. Now occult science is in a position to show that a large proportion of all diseases owe their origin to the fact that the perverse actions and mistakes of the astral body are transmitted to the etheric body, and

indirectly by its means^r destroy the perfect harmony of the physical body. The deeper connection, which can here be only hinted at, and the true cause of many of the conditions of disease, elude that kind of scientific observation which confines itself solely to the facts obtained by means of the physical senses. The connection in most cases comes about in such a way that an injury to the astral body does not cause manifestations of disease in the physical body in the same incarnation in which the injury takes place, but in a later one. Hence the laws now under consideration have meaning only for one who is able to admit that human earth-life is repeated again and again. But even if deeper knowledge of this kind is despised, ordinary observation of life makes it plain that human beings indulge in far too many pleasures and desires which undermine the harmony of the physical body. And the seat of pleasure, desire, passion, is not in the physical but in the astral body. The latter is still so imperfect, in many respects, that it is able to destroy the harmony of the physical body.

It should also be mentioned here that such explanations as these are by no means intended as proofs of the assertions of occult science as to the evolution of the four principles of man's being. The proofs are drawn from spiritual research, which shows that the physical body has behind it a transformation, enacted four times,

into higher degrees of perfection, and that man's other principles have been perfected to a lesser degree, as has been described. It is desired merely to indicate here that these communications made by spiritual research relate to facts which are visible in their effects even to ordinary observation, in the degrees of perfection reached by the physical body, etheric body, and so on.

* * *

If we wish to draw an approximately true picture of the conditions prevailing during the Saturn evolution we must take into account that while it lasted there were virtually, as yet, none of the things and creatures existing which now belong to the earth, and are included in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. The inhabitants of these three kingdoms were formed during later periods of evolution. Man alone, of the earthly beings now perceptible to physical sense, was then existing, and of him only his physical body, as described. But there are at present on the earth not only the denizens of the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms, but other beings as well, not manifesting in a physical embodiment. Such entities were also present during the Saturn evolution, and their activity on the Saturn scene of action brought about the subsequent evolution of man.

If the organs of spiritual perception are at first directed, not to the beginning and end, but to the

middle period of evolution during the Saturn incarnation, there will be seen a cosmic being, which in the main consists only of heat. Nothing is to be found composed of gaseous, fluid, or even solid constituents. All these states appear only in later incarnations. Let us assume that a human being, with the present organs of sense, were to approach the Saturn conditions as a spectator. None of the sense-impressions possible to him would confront him there except the feeling of warmth, or heat. Even supposing that such a being were to approach Saturn, he would only feel, on reaching the portion of space he was to occupy, that this had a different temperature from the rest of his special environment. But he would not find that portion of space by any means equally warm throughout, for warmer and colder parts would alternate in the most promiscuous fashion. Radiating heat would be felt along certain lines. And the lines would not only extend straight on, but geometrical shapes would be formed by the variations in heat. Something would be discerned like a cosmic being, organically constructed in itself, appearing in changing conditions, and consisting only of heat.

It is difficult for a man of the present day to form an idea of anything consisting only of heat, for he is not accustomed to think of heat as something self-existent, but as a perceptible quality of warm or cold, gaseous, liquid, or solid bodies. To

one who has adopted the physical conceptions of our time it will seem particularly absurd to speak of heat in the foregoing manner. He will, perhaps, say: "There are solid, liquid, and gaseous bodies; but heat only denotes a condition assumed by one of these three forms of body. If the smallest particles of a gas are in motion, the movement will be felt as heat. Where there is no gas, there can be no movement, consequently no heat."

To an occult investigator the fact appears differently. To him heat is something of which he speaks in the same sense as he speaks of gases, of liquids, or of solid bodies. To him it is simply a still finer substance than gas. And a gas to him is nothing but condensed heat, in the same sense that a liquid is condensed vapour, or a solid body condensed liquid. Thus the occultist speaks of heat bodies just as he does of bodies formed of gas and vapour.

If we are to follow the spiritual investigator into this region, it is only necessary to admit that there is such a thing as psychic perception. In the world, as it presents itself to the physical senses, heat appears entirely as a condition of solid, liquid, or gaseous bodies; but that condition is merely the outward appearance of heat, or the effect of it. Physicists speak only of this effect of heat, not of its inner nature. Let us try for once to leave entirely out of consideration any effect of heat received through external bodies,

and to realize merely the inward experience which comes from saying the words; "I feel warm," "I feel cold." That inward experience is the only thing capable of giving an idea of what Saturn was during its period of evolution described above. It would have been possible to pass right through the portion of space it occupied: no gas would have been there to exercise pressure, no solid or liquid body from which light-impressions could have come; but at every point of space occupied, it would have been inwardly felt, without any external impression: "Here there is such and such a degree of heat."

In a cosmic body of this constitution there are no conditions for the animal, vegetable, and mineral organisms of to-day.¹ The beings whose sphere of action was this Saturn were at quite a different stage of evolution from that of the present inhabitants of the earth who are perceptible to the senses. In the first instance, beings were there who had no physical body like that of contemporary man. We must also guard against thinking of man's present physical embodiment, when mention is made of a "physical body" in this connection. Rather must we carefully distinguish between the physical and the mineral body. A physical body is one governed by

¹Therefore it is perhaps scarcely necessary to remark that what has been described above could never actually happen. A contemporary man cannot, as he is, approach the ancient Saturn as a spectator. The account was given merely for the sake of illustration.

the physical laws which are now observable in the mineral kingdom. Now man's present physical body is not only ruled by those physical laws, but is still partly composed of mineral matter. There can be no question as yet on Saturn of a physical-mineral body of this kind. There is only a physical bodily form, governed by physical laws; but these laws are manifested only through the agency of heat.

Therefore the physical body is a fine, subtle, ethereal heat body; and the whole of Saturn consists of such heat bodies. They are the beginnings of the present physical-mineral human body. The latter has been formed out of the former, because there have become incorporated with the original body the more recently formed gaseous, liquid, and solid substances.

Among the beings of which we are now speaking, who, besides man, were inhabitants of Saturn, there were, for instance, some which did not need a physical body at all. The lowest principle of their nature was an etheric or vital body. On the other hand, they had one principle higher than the principles of human nature. Man's highest principle is the Spirit-Man (*Âtmâ*). These beings have one still higher. And between the etheric body and the Spirit-Man they have all the principles described in this book as also found in man: the astral body, ego, Spirit-Self, and Life-Spirit. Just as our earth is surrounded

by an atmosphere, so too was Saturn; only in this case the "atmosphere" was of a spiritual nature. It really consisted of the beings just named and some others. Now there was constant reciprocal action between the heat bodies of Saturn and the beings we have described. The latter projected the principles of their being down into the physical heat bodies of Saturn. And whereas there was no life in those heat bodies themselves, the life of their neighbours was expressed in them. They might be compared to mirrors; only there were reflected in them, not the images of the living beings mentioned above, but their conditions of life. Therefore, although nothing living could have been discovered in Saturn itself, yet it had a vivifying effect on its environment in celestial space, because it threw back into space, like an echo, the reflection of the life which had been sent to it. The whole of Saturn appeared as a mirror of celestial life. Very high beings whose life was reflected by Saturn are called in occult science "Lords of Wisdom."¹ Their activity on Saturn did not begin only during the middle period of its evolution, which has been described. In a certain way it had even then already ceased. Before they could be in a position to rejoice in the reflection of their own life from Saturn's heat bodies they had to make those bodies capable of producing

¹ In Christian spiritual science they bear the name of "Kyriotetes," that is, "Dominions."

such a reflection. Therefore their activity set in soon after the beginning of the Saturn evolution. When this happened, the body of Saturn was still chaotic material, which could not have reflected anything.

By looking at that chaotic material, we have transferred ourselves, by spiritual observation, to the beginning of the Saturn evolution. What is to be observed there does not as yet bear anything of the later character of heat. If we wish to describe it, we can only speak of a quality which may be compared with the human will. From first to last it is nothing but "Will." Therefore it is an entirely spiritual condition that meets us here. If we ask whence came this will, we see it proceeding from the effluence of exalted beings, who brought their evolution, by steps only to be dimly conceived, up to such a point that when the Saturn evolution began they were able to pour forth will from their own nature. When this effluence had lasted a certain time, the activity of the Lords of Wisdom described above was united with will. Through this means the will which had hitherto had no attributes gradually received the quality of reflecting life back into celestial space. In occult science the beings who found their happiness at the beginning of the Saturn evolution in pouring forth will, are called the "Lords of Will."¹

¹In Christian esoteric science they are called "Thrones."

After a certain stage of the Saturn evolution had been reached, through the coöperation of will and life, there sets in the influence of other beings, who are also within Saturn's environment. These are the "Lords of Motion."¹ They have no physical or etheric body. Their lowest principle is the astral body. When the Saturn bodies have acquired the capacity for reflecting life, that reflected life can be interpenetrated with the qualities which have their seat in the astral bodies of the Lords of Motion. In consequence of this, it appears as if expressions of feelings, emotions, and similar psychic forces had been hurled out of Saturn into celestial space. The whole of Saturn appears like one animated being, manifesting sympathies and antipathies. These psychic manifestations, however, are by no means its own, but merely the activity of the Lords of Motion thrown back again.

This also having lasted for a certain period, there begins the activity of yet other beings, that is, of the "Lords of Form."² Their lowest principle, too, is an astral body; but that body is at a different stage of evolution from that of the Lords of Motion; whereas these communicate only general manifestations of feeling to the reflected life, the astral body of the Lords of Form operates in such a way that the manifestations

¹ The Christian "Dynamis," or "Principalities."

² The Christian "Exusiai," or "Powers."

of feeling are flung out into cosmic space as if they came from individual beings. It might be said that the Lords of Motion make the whole of Saturn appear as an animated being. The Lords of Form separate that life into individual living beings, so that Saturn now appears as a conglomerate of such psychic beings.

Let us imagine, for the sake of illustration, a mulberry or blackberry, made up, as it is, of small individual berries. Thus, to clairvoyant vision, Saturn, in the period of evolution now being described, is made up of individual Saturn beings, which of course have neither life nor soul of their own, but reflect the life and soul of its inhabitants. Into this condition of Saturn there now come beings whose astral body is also their lowest principle, but who have brought it to such a high stage of development that it operates in the same way as the present human ego. Through these beings, the ego in the environment of Saturn looks down on that planet, and it imparts its nature to Saturn's individual living beings. Thus something is sent out from Saturn into cosmic space, which has an effect similar to that of human personality in the present conditions of life. The beings causing that effect are designated "Sons of Personality."¹ They confer on the Saturn bodies the appearance of personality. Personality

¹The Christian "Archai," or "First beginnings."

itself, however, is not present on Saturn, but only, as it were, its reflected image, the shell or husk of personality. The real personality of these spirits is in the environment of Saturn. As a result of these Sons of Personality letting their essence stream back from the Saturn bodies in the manner described, that fine substance is bestowed on those bodies which has previously been described as heat. In the whole of Saturn there is no subjectivity; but the Sons of Personality recognize the image of their own subjectivity, when it streams out to them from Saturn as heat.

When all this is taking place, the Sons of Personality are on the same level on which man now stands. They are then passing through their "human" period. In order to look at this fact with an unprejudiced eye, we must imagine it possible for a being to be human without being in the exact form in which man now exists. The Sons of Personality are "human beings" on Saturn. As their lowest principle they have not the physical, but the astral body with the ego. Hence they cannot express the experiences of their astral body in a physical and etheric body as contemporary man is able to do; they not only *have* an ego, however, but *are aware* of the fact, because the heat of Saturn brings that ego streaming back into their consciousness. In fact, they are human beings under different circumstances from those of earth.

In the sequel of the Saturn evolution, facts follow of a different kind from those already related. Whereas everything hitherto was a reflection of outer life and feeling, there now begins a kind of inner life. In the Saturn world there begins a life of light, flickering here and there, and growing dim again. A quivering glimmer is seen in some places, something like flashes of lightning in others. The Saturn heat bodies begin to glimmer, to sparkle, and even to emit rays. Because this stage of evolution has been reached, there again arises the possibility for certain beings to develop their activity. They are those known to occult science as "Sons of Fire."¹ These beings certainly have an astral body, but at this particular stage of their existence they are unable to give suggestions to their own astral bodies; they would not be able to excite any feeling or emotion unless they could act upon the heat bodies which have attained the Saturn stage of evolution described. That action affords them the possibility of recognizing their own existence from the effect which they produce. They cannot say to themselves, "I am here"; but rather, "My environment allows me to be here." They have perceptions, and what they perceive is the light-effects on Saturn which have been described. These are, in a certain manner, their ego. This gives them

¹The Christian "Archangeloi," or "Archangels."

a peculiar kind of consciousness. It is designated "picture-consciousness." It may be represented as having the nature of human dream-consciousness, except that the degree of activity it enjoys must be thought of as very much greater than it is in human dreams, and also that it is not a question of shadowy dream-pictures floating hither and thither, but of such as have a real connection with the play of light on Saturn.

During this reciprocal action between the Sons of Fire and the Saturn heat bodies, the germs of the human organs of sense become incorporated for the purpose of evolution. The organs, by means of which contemporary man becomes cognizant of the physical world, begin to shine in their first delicate ethereal outlines. Human phantoms, displaying as yet nothing but the original light-forms of the sense-organs, become discernible within Saturn, to the clairvoyant faculty of perception. These sense-organs are, therefore, the result of the activity of the Sons of Fire; but it is not only these spirits that have brought about their inception. Other beings come upon the scene of Saturn at the same time as these Sons of Fire,—beings so far advanced in their evolution that they are able to make use of the germs of the sense-organs for beholding the cosmic events taking place in the Saturn life. They are the "Lords of Love."¹ If they were

¹ The Christian "Seraphim."

not there, the Sons of Fire could not have the consciousness described above. They behold the events on Saturn with a consciousness which makes it possible for them to convey these events as pictures to the Sons of Fire. They themselves forego all the advantages which might accrue to them from contemplating the events on Saturn; they renounce all joys and pleasures; they give up all these in order that the Sons of Fire may come into possession of them.

A new period of Saturn's existence succeeds these occurrences. Something else is added to the play of light. If what here presents itself to clairvoyant perception be reported, it may seem an absurdity to many. Within Saturn, intermingled sensations of taste seem to be surging. Sweet, bitter, sour, are perceived within Saturn in all kinds of places; and outside, in space, all this is heard as sound, as a kind of music.

In the course of these processes there are again certain beings who find it possible to develop activity on Saturn. These are the "Sons of Twilight, or Life."¹ They enter into reciprocal action with the forces of taste surging up and down within Saturn. By this means their etheric or vital body attains a state of such activity that it may be called a kind of metabolism. They bring life into the interior of Saturn. Hence

¹The Christian "Angeloi," or "Angels."

processes of nutriment and excretion take place in Saturn. This inner life makes it possible for yet other beings to come into the planet, the "Lords of Harmony."† They bestow a dim kind of consciousness on the Sons of Life, which is even more vague and dim than the dream-consciousness of contemporary man. It is of the kind that now comes to man in dreamless sleep, and is, indeed, of such a low order that it does not, so to speak, enter into man's consciousness. Yet it is there. It differs from waking consciousness in degree and also in its nature. Plants, too, have this dreamless-sleep consciousness at the present time. Even though it does not bring about any perceptions of an external world, in the human sense of the words, yet it regulates the life processes and brings them into harmony with the processes of the outer world.

This adjustment cannot be perceived by the Sons of Life at the stage of Saturn's evolution now being described; but the Lords of Harmony perceive it, and therefore it is they who really do the adjusting. All this life is enacted in the human phantoms already described. To clairvoyant vision they consequently appear animated; but yet their life is only a semblance of life. It is the life of the Sons of Life, who in some way make use of the human phantoms in order to manifest themselves in life.

† The Christian "Cherubim."

Let us now turn our attention to the human phantoms with their semblance of life. During the Saturn period described, their form is constantly changing. Sometimes they bear one aspect, sometimes another. In the further course of evolution, their forms become more definite, and occasionally permanent. This is due to their becoming interpenetrated by the action of the Spirits described at the beginning of the Saturn evolution,—the Lords of Will (the Thrones). The consequence is that the human phantom itself is seen to have the simplest, dullest form of consciousness. This must be thought of as still duller than the consciousness of dreamless sleep. Under present conditions, minerals have that consciousness. It brings the inner being into harmony with the outer physical world. On Saturn it is the Lords of Will who regulate that harmony. And man by this means appears a copy of Saturn life itself. What Saturn life is upon a large scale, man at this stage is upon a small scale. And thus the first germ is prepared for that which is still only a germ in contemporary man: for the "Spirit-Man" (Âtmâ). This dull human will within Saturn is manifested to clairvoyant faculty by effects which may be compared with odours. Outside, in celestial space, there is present a manifestation like that of a personality, which however is not directed by an inner ego but regulated from outside, like a machine. Those who regulate it are the Lords of Will.

It will become evident, from a survey of the foregoing, that starting from the middle condition of the Saturn evolution at first portrayed, the steps of that evolution might be described by comparing their effects with sense-perceptions of the present time. It might be said that the Saturn evolution is manifested as heat; then a play of light is added; then a play of taste and sound; at length, something appears which is manifested within the interior of Saturn as sensations of smelling; outside, as a human ego working like a machine.

What have the Saturn revelations to say about what preceded the heat condition? Now this is what cannot be compared with anything accessible to outer sense-perception. A state of things precedes the heat condition, which contemporary man experiences only in his inner being. When he gives himself up to ideas which he forms in his own soul, without having any inducement brought to bear on him by an external impression, then he has something within himself which cannot be perceived by any physical sense, but is 'only accessible to the perception of the higher clairvoyant vision. Manifestations precede the heat condition of Saturn, which can be cognized only by a clairvoyant. Three such conditions may be mentioned: purely psychic warmth, not outwardly perceptible; purely spiritual light, which is outwardly darkness; and lastly, something of a

spiritual nature which is complete in itself, and needs no outer being in order to become self-conscious. Pure, inward heat accompanies the appearance of the Lords of Motion; pure, spiritual light, that of the Lords of Wisdom; pure, inward being is linked with the first effluence of the Lords of Will.

Thus, with the appearance of heat on Saturn, our evolution first comes forth out of the inner life of pure spirituality into outwardly manifested existence. It is, of course, particularly difficult for present-day consciousness to realize this, even though it should be added that what is known as "time" appears first during the heat condition of Saturn. That is to say, the previous conditions have nothing to do with time. They belong to that sphere which may be called, in occult science, "duration." Consequently, everything that is said in this book about the conditions existing in the "Sphere of Duration" must be understood in such a way that when expressions referring to time conditions are used, they are only to be accepted for the sake of comparison and explanation. That which, in a certain sense, precedes "time," can be expressed in human language only by terms which imply the idea of time. Even if we are aware that the first, second, and third Saturn conditions were not enacted "one after the other," in the present sense of the words, yet we cannot do otherwise

than describe them one after the other. Indeed, in spite of their duration or coexistence in time, they are so dependent on one another that this very dependence may be compared with a time sequence.

This indication of the first conditions of evolution on Saturn also throws light on any further questions that may be asked as to the origin of those conditions. From the purely intellectual point of view, it is, of course, quite possible, when dealing with the source of anything, to inquire after "the source of the source." But in the face of facts, this is not possible. A comparison will help us to realize it. If we find ruts on a road we may ask, "To what are they due?" And it may be replied, "To a carriage." It may further be asked: "Whence did the carriage come? Whither was it going?" An answer founded on fact is again possible. We may then proceed to ask, "Who occupied the carriage? What purpose had the person using it? What was he, or she, doing?" At last, however, we shall reach a point at which inquiry by means of facts finds its natural limit; and on inquiring further we get away from the original questions. We only continue the inquiry mechanically, as it were.

In such matters as the one brought forward as a comparison, it is easy to see where facts demand the end of the inquiry. It is not so evident when

we are face to face with great cosmic questions. But as the result of really exact observation it will nevertheless be seen that all inquiry as to origins must come to an end at the Saturn conditions portrayed above. For we have reached a region in which beings and events are no longer justified by that from which they proceed, but by themselves.

As a result of the Saturn evolution it appears that the human germ developed up to a certain point. It attained the low, dim state of consciousness described above. We must not imagine that its evolution does not begin until the last of the Saturn stages. The Lords of Will carry on their work through all the conditions. Only the result is most striking to clairvoyant perception in the last period. There is not anything like a fixed boundary between the activities of the several groups of beings. If it is said that the Lords of Will work first, then the Lords of Wisdom, and so on, it is not meant that they are working only at that time. They are working all through the Saturn evolution; only their activity can best be observed during the periods specified. The several groups have, as it were, the leadership at those times.

Thus the whole Saturn evolution appears as a working out of what streamed forth from the Lords of Will through the Lords of Wisdom, Motion, Form, and the rest. By this means,

those spiritual beings themselves pass through evolution. For instance, the Lords of Wisdom stand on a different level after they have received their life reflected back from Saturn, from the one on which they previously stood. The result of that activity exalts the faculties of their own being. The consequence is that, on the completion of such activity, something similar to human sleep comes upon them. To their periods of activity in connection with Saturn there succeed other periods, during which they live, as it were, in other worlds. At these times their activity is withdrawn from Saturn. On this account clairvoyant perception sees an ascent and a descent in the Saturn evolution that has been described. The ascent lasts until the formation of the heat condition. Then, with the play of light, the ebb tide sets in. And when the human phantoms have assumed form through the Lords of Will, the spiritual beings have also gradually withdrawn themselves. The Saturn evolution, as such, dies away; as an evolution, it disappears. A kind of resting pause occurs.

The human germ at the same time enters upon a state of dissolution; not, however, a state in which it passes away, but one like that of a plant seed, resting in the earth in order that it may ripen into a new plant. Thus the human germ, in the bosom of the cosmos, takes rest before its next awakening. And by the time the moment

of awakening has arrived, the spiritual beings described above have acquired, under other conditions, the faculties by means of which they can further advance the human germ. The Lords of Wisdom have, in their etheric body, gained the faculty not only of enjoying the reflection of life as they did on Saturn, but of pouring life forth from themselves, and endowing other beings with it. The Lords of Motion are now as far advanced as were the Lords of Wisdom on Saturn. Then the lowest principle of their being was the astral body; they now possess an etheric, or vital body; and in a corresponding degree the other spiritual beings have reached a further stage of evolution. All these spiritual beings are therefore able to act in a different way, on the further evolution of the human germ, from that in which they acted on Saturn.

But the human germ was dissolved at the end of the Saturn evolution. In order that the more highly evolved spirit-beings might resume their work where they had left it off, the human germ must once more briefly recapitulate the stages through which it had passed on Saturn. This, in fact, is what appears to clairvoyant faculties of perception. The human germ comes forth out of its retirement and begins to develop by its own ability, by means of the forces which had been implanted within it on Saturn. It comes forth out of the darkness as a "being of

Will," and assumes the appearance of life, of psychic qualities (Seelenhaftigkeit), and so on, up to that mechanical manifestation of personality which it had at the end of the Saturn evolution.

* * *

The second of the great periods of evolution that have been mentioned, the "Sun period," effects the raising of man's being to a higher stage of consciousness than that which it had attained on Saturn. Compared with man's present state of consciousness, the Sun condition might certainly be termed "unconsciousness." For it is approximately like that condition in which contemporary man is during absolutely dreamless sleep. Or it might be compared to the low degree of consciousness in which our vegetable world now slumbers. For occult science there is no such thing as unconsciousness, but only different degrees of consciousness. Everything in the world is conscious.

In the course of the Sun evolution, human nature attains a higher degree of consciousness through the incorporation within it of the etheric, or vital body. Before this can take place the Saturn conditions must be recapitulated in the manner described above. This recapitulation has quite a definite meaning. That is to say, when the period of rest which was spoken of in the foregoing statement has come to an end, that which was

formerly Saturn issues forth, out of "cosmic sleep," as a new celestial body, the Sun. But the conditions of evolution have meanwhile changed. The spirit-beings, whose activity on behalf of Saturn we have portrayed, have progressed onward into different conditions. Yet at first the human germ appears on the newly formed Sun in the form it possessed on Saturn. It has first of all so to transform the various stages of evolution it has adopted on Saturn that they may suit the new conditions on the Sun. Consequently, the sun epoch begins with a recapitulation of the occurrences on Saturn, adjusted to the changed conditions of Sun life. Now when man's being has advanced so far that the stage of evolution it reached on Saturn has been adapted to the Sun conditions, the Lords of Wisdom already mentioned begin to let the etheric, or vital body, stream into the physical body. The higher stage which man reaches on the Sun may therefore be described in this way: the physical body, already formed in the germ-state on Saturn, is raised to a second stage of perfection by becoming the vehicle of an etheric, or vital body. This last-named body attains its first degree of perfection on its own account during the Sun evolution. In order, however, that the second degree of perfection for the physical and the first for the etheric body may be arrived at, the interposition of yet more spirit-beings is necessary during the further course

of the Sun life, in a similar manner to that which has been described as taking place during the Saturn stage.

When the Lords of Wisdom begin to pour in the etheric body, the Sun body, previously dark, begins to shine. At the same time the first appearances of inner activity are seen in the human germ; life has begun. What had to be described as a semblance of life on Saturn now becomes actual life. The influx lasts for a certain time, at the end of which an important change for the human germ sets in—that is to say, it is divided into two parts. Whereas up to this point the physical and etheric bodies formed an intimately connected whole, the physical body now begins to detach itself as a separate part. Yet even that separated physical body is still pervaded by the etheric body. Therefore we have now to do with a human being composed of two principles. One portion is a physical body permeated by an etheric body; the other is the etheric body and nothing else. This separation comes to pass, however, during a period of rest in the Sun life. During this pause the shining, which had begun to appear, dies away. The separation takes place during a “cosmic night” (Pralaya), as it were. Yet this interval of rest is much shorter than the one between the Saturn and Sun evolutions mentioned above. At the expiration of the resting period the Lords of Wisdom

work for a while on the two-principled being of man, just as they had previously done on the one-principled being. Then the Lords of Motion begin their activity. They stream through the human etheric body with their own astral body. By this means man acquires the capacity for executing inner movements in the physical body. These movements may be compared with those of sap in a plant of our own time.

The Saturn body consisted entirely of heat substance. During the Sun evolution that heat substance is condensed into the state which may be compared with that of our present-day gas or steam. It is the condition which occult science is accustomed to call "air." The first beginnings of such a state are seen after the Lords of Motion have begun their activity. The following spectacle is presented to clairvoyant consciousness: Within the heat substance there appears something like delicate organisms which are set in regular motion by the forces of the etheric body. These organisms represent the human physical body at the stage of evolution now proper to it. They are permeated through and through with heat, and also wrapped, as it were, in a heat envelope. From a physical point of view, man's nature may be said to be composed of heat structures with air forms embedded in them—the latter in regular motion. Hence, if we wish to retain the foregoing comparison with a plant of

the present day, we must remember that it is not a solid plant organism which we have to consider, but an air or gas form,¹ the movements of which may be compared with the circulation of the sap in plants of to-day.

The evolution thus indicated continues. After a certain time another interval of rest sets in; after this the Lords of Motion go on working until their activity is supplemented by that of the Lords of Form. The effect of the latter is that the gas structures which before were constantly changing, now assume lasting forms. This, too, happens because the Lords of Form let their forces flow in and out of the human etheric body. When the Lords of Motion alone were acting on the gaseous organisms, these were in perpetual motion, not keeping their form for an instant. Now, however, they temporarily assume distinguishable shapes. Again, after a certain period, there occurs a time of rest; once more, after this, the Lords of Form continue their activity. But then entirely new conditions set in within the Sun evolution.

For the point has now been reached when the Sun evolution has attained its zenith. This is the time at which the Lords of Personality, who attained their human stage on Saturn, ascend to a higher degree of perfection. They advance beyond the human stage; they attain a form of

¹The gas appears to clairvoyant consciousness through the effect of light which emanates from it. We might therefore speak also of light forms, which are apparent to spiritual vision.

consciousness which contemporary man does not yet possess in his normal course of development on the earth. He will acquire it when the earth—the fourth of the planetary stages of evolution—has reached its goal and has entered upon the next planetary period. Then man will not only perceive around him what his present physical senses enable him to cognize, but he will be able to see in images the inner psychic conditions of the beings surrounding him. He will have a (clairvoyant) picture-consciousness, although retaining complete self-consciousness. There will be nothing dreamlike or vague in his clairvoyance, but he will sense what is psychic, in pictures certainly, but in such a way that these images will be the expression of realities, as physical colours and sounds are now. Man, at present, can attain to this degree of clairvoyance only through occult training, which will be treated later in this book.

Now this clairvoyance is attained by the Sons of Personality, as the gift of their normal evolution, midway in the Sun period; and it is just on this account that they become capable of acting on the newly formed etheric body of man during the Sun evolution, in a way similar to that in which they acted on the physical body on Saturn. Just as there the heat reflected their own personality back to them, so do the gaseous organisms now reflect back to them, in gleams of light, the

images of their clairvoyant consciousness. They clairvoyantly behold what is taking place on the Sun. This vision is by no means mere observation; it is as if something of the force which mortals call love made itself felt in the images which stream forth from the Sun. And if a clairvoyant looks more closely, he will find the cause of this appearance. Exalted beings have blended their activity with the light that is being radiated from the Sun. They are the Lords of Love (the Christian Seraphim) already mentioned. Henceforth they act, together with the Sons of Personality, on the human etheric, or vital body. By means of that activity the etheric body advances a step farther along its path of evolution. It acquires the capacity not only of transforming the gaseous forms within it but of so elaborating them that the first indications of a propagation of living human beings appear. In some way something is segregated and driven out (as though exuded) from the gaseous organisms that have been formed, and is moulded into shapes resembling their mother-forms.

In order to describe the further course of the Sun evolution, reference must be made to a fact in the formation of worlds which is of the greatest possible significance. It is this,—that by no means every being attains the goal of its evolution in the course of one epoch; there are some that fall short of that goal. Thus, during the

Saturn evolution, it was not all the Sons of Personality that actually reached the human stage for which, as described above, they were destined; and just as little did all the physical human bodies, developed on Saturn, attain the degree of maturity which qualifies them to become vehicles of a self-dependent etheric body on the Sun. The consequence is that beings and organisms are present on the Sun which are not in harmony with their environment. These must now make up, during the Sun evolution, for what they failed to attain on Saturn. The following may, therefore, be clairvoyantly observed during the Sun period. When the Lords of Wisdom begin their pouring in of the etheric body, the Sun body is to some extent darkened. Structures are mingled with it which, properly speaking, belong to Saturn. They are heat organisms which are not able to condense themselves into air in the proper manner. These are the human beings left behind in the Saturn stage. They are not able to become vehicles of a perfected etheric body in the normal way.

Now the heat substance of Saturn, which has thus been left behind, splits into two parts on the Sun. One part is absorbed, as it were, by human bodies, and henceforward forms a kind of lower nature within man's being. Thus something, which really corresponds to the Saturn stage, is incorporated in the bodily part of man on the Sun.

Now just as the Saturn body of man made it possible for the Sons of Personality to raise themselves to the human stage, the Saturn part of man performs the same office on the Sun for the Sons of Fire. They raise themselves to the human stage by letting their forces flow in and out of the Saturn part of man, as did the Sons of Personality on Saturn.

This also happens in the middle period of the Sun evolution. The Saturn part of human nature is then so far matured that with its help the Sons of Fire (Archangeloi) are able to pass through their human stage. Another part of the Saturnian heat substance becomes detached and attains an independent existence alongside of and among the human beings on the Sun. This forms a second kingdom by the side of the human kingdom, a kingdom which develops on the Sun only a perfectly independent physical body, as a heat body. In consequence of this, the fully evolved Sons of Personality are not able to direct their activity toward any independent etheric body in the manner before described. But there were also certain Sons of Personality left behind at the Saturn stage who fell short of humanity then. There exists a bond of attraction between them and the second Sun kingdom which has become independent. They must now act toward the backward kingdom on the Sun as their advanced brethren did on Saturn in regard to

human beings. The latter had only their physical body perfected there. But there is no possibility on the Sun for such a work on the part of the backward Sons of Personality. They therefore separate themselves from the Sun body, and form a self-dependent celestial body outside it. This body, accordingly, withdraws from the Sun, and from it the backward Sons of Personality act on the beings of the second Sun kingdom which have been described. In this way two world-organisms have been formed out of the one which was previously Saturn. The Sun has now in its environment a second celestial body, one which exhibits a kind of re-birth of Saturn, a new Saturn. From this Saturn the character of personality is conferred on the second Sun kingdom. Therefore within this kingdom we have to do with beings which have no personality on the Sun itself. But yet they reflect back to the Sons of Personality on the new Saturn the special personality of those spirits. Clairvoyant consciousness is able to observe heat forces among the human beings on the Sun, which act upon the regular course of Sun evolution, and in which the sway of the spirits described as belonging to the new Saturn is to be seen.

We have to notice the following facts about man's being during the middle period of the Sun evolution. It is divided into a physical body and an etheric body. Within these there plays

the activity of the advanced Sons of Personality conjointly with that of the Lords of Love. Now part of the backward Saturn nature is mingled with the physical body. In this there plays the activity of the Sons of Fire. We have now to see in everything which the Sons of Fire effect on the backward Saturn nature, the forerunners of the present human sense-organs. It has been shown how these Sons of Fire were already at work on the elaboration of the sense-germs in the heat substance on Saturn. The first outline of the present human glands is to be recognized in what is accomplished by the Sons of Personality conjointly with the Lords of Love (Seraphim).

But when this is done the work of the Sons of Personality dwelling on the new Saturn is not yet finished. They not only extend their activity to the second Sun kingdom mentioned above, but they establish a kind of connection between that kingdom and the human senses. The heat substances of this kingdom flow in and out of the germs of the human sense-organs. By this means the human being on the Sun acquires a sort of perception of the lower kingdom situated outside him. That perception is naturally but a dim one, closely corresponding to the dull Saturn-consciousness previously treated of. And it consists essentially of various heat effects.

Everything here described as taking place in the middle of the Sun evolution lasts for a definite

period. Then a time of rest again occurs. After that, things continue for a while in the same manner up to a certain point of evolution, at which the human etheric body is so far matured that a united action of the Sons of Life (Angeloi) and the Lords of Harmony (Cherubim) can set in. There now appear to clairvoyant consciousness, within man's being, certain manifestations which may be compared with perceptions of taste, and which are made known externally as sounds. A similar thing has already been stated about the Saturn evolution. But here on the Sun the processes relating to human beings are more inward, and full of more self-dependent life.

The Sons of Life thereby acquire that dim picture-consciousness which the Sons of Fire had already attained on Saturn. In this the Lords of Harmony are their helpers. They really behold clairvoyantly what is now being enacted within the Sun evolution; only they give up all the results of that contemplation, and the enjoyment of those revelations of Wisdom that arise from it, and allow them to stream, like splendid visions of enchantment, into the dreamlike consciousness of the Sons of Life. The latter again work these pictures of their visions into the etheric body of man, so that it attains higher and higher stages of development.

Again an interval of rest sets in; again everything is raised from "cosmic sleep"; and after

man's being has lasted a while longer, it is sufficiently advanced to direct its forces for itself. These forces are the same that were poured into man's being by the "Thrones" during the latter part of the Saturn period. Human nature now evolves by an inner life, which, in its manifestation to clairvoyant consciousness, may be compared with an inward perception of smell. But outside, in the direction of celestial space, man's being is manifested as a personality, though not one, it is true, directed by an inner ego. It appears more like a plant working as a personality. It has indeed been shown that at the end of the Saturn evolution personality is manifested like a machine. And just as then the first germ was developed of what becomes capable of evolving only in contemporary man,—the Spirit-Man (Âtmâ),—so at this point there is formed a similar first germ of the Life-Spirit (Buddhi).

After this has all continued for some time, an interval of rest again occurs. Following this interval, as in the previous instances, the activity of the human being is resumed for a while. Then conditions set in, which present themselves as a fresh intervention of the Lords of Wisdom. By its means human nature becomes capable of feeling the first traces of sympathy and antipathy in regard to its environment. As yet there is no real sensation in all this, but only a forerunner of sensation. For the inner

life-activity, which might be characterized in its manifestation as perception of smell, is revealed externally as if in a kind of primitive language. If the human being is inwardly conscious of a useful smell—or taste, or glitter,—it is manifested outwardly by a sound; and the same thing happens, in a corresponding way, with an inwardly uncongenial perception. The real purpose of the Sun evolution for humanity is attained by means of all the processes that have been described. Human nature has reached a higher stage of consciousness than that of the Saturn period. It is the consciousness of sleep.

After some time, the point of evolution is also reached at which the higher beings connected with the Sun stage must pass into other spheres in order to work out that with which they have endowed themselves by their work on the human being. A long period of rest sets in, one similar to that between the Saturn and Sun evolutions. Everything that has been perfected on the Sun passes into a condition which may be compared with that of a plant when its powers of growth are resting in the seed. But just as those powers of growth appear again in a new plant, so does everything that was living on the Sun come forth again, after the period of rest, from the womb of the world, and begin a new planetary existence.

The meaning of such a term of rest, or "sleep of worlds" (Pralaya), will readily be understood

if we will only direct our spiritual vision to one of the orders of beings already mentioned, for instance, to the Lords of Wisdom. They were not far enough evolved on Saturn to be able to pour forth from themselves an etheric body. They were not prepared for this until they had gone through their experiences on Saturn. During the rest (Pralaya) they are transforming into actual faculty what had been previously prepared in them. Thus on the Sun they are evolved far enough to pour life forth from themselves, and to endow the human being with an etheric body of its own.

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After the interval of rest, that which had previously been the Sun comes forth again out of the "sleep of worlds." That is, it again becomes perceptible to the clairvoyant faculties which had been able to observe it before, but had lost sight of it during the resting period. There are now two points to be observed with regard to the newly appearing planetary organism, which may, in occult science, be denoted the "Moon" (and this must not be confused with that portion of it which is now the earth's moon). In the first place, that which had detached itself during the Sun period as a "new Saturn" is once more within the new planetary body. This Saturn has therefore been again united with the Sun during the term of rest. Everything which was

in the original Saturn reappears at first as one world-organism. Secondly, the human etheric bodies which had been formed on the Sun have been absorbed, during the resting period, by that which constitutes the spiritual sheath of the planet. At this point of time, therefore, they do not make their appearance united with the corresponding physical human bodies, but these latter at first appear separately. It is true, they contain everything which had been gained for them on Saturn and the Sun, but they are without the etheric, or vital body. Indeed, they cannot incorporate that etheric body within themselves immediately, for it has also been passing, during the period of rest, through an evolution with which they are not yet harmonized.

What occurs at the beginning of the Moon evolution, in order to bring about this adjustment, is, first of all, another recapitulation of the Saturnian events. The physical part of man passes once more through the stages of the Saturn evolution, but under greatly altered circumstances. On Saturn there were only the forces of a heat body at work within; now there are also those of the gas body that has been elaborated. These latter forces do not, however, appear quite at the beginning of the Moon evolution. Then everything appears as if man's being were composed only of heat substance, and as if the gas forces were lying dormant

within that substance. Then comes a time when the first indications of these forces make their appearance; and lastly, in the latest period of the Saturn recapitulation, man's being has the same appearance as during his life-condition on the Sun. Yet, even now, all the life there proves to be but a semblance of life.

Next occurs a period of rest similar to the short periods of rest of the Sun evolution. Then the pouring in of the etheric body, for which the physical body has now become ripe, begins anew. As in the case of the recapitulation of Saturn, this influx takes place in three periods, distinguishable one from the other. During the second of these, man's being is so far adjusted to the new Moon conditions that the Lords of Motion are able to bring into play the faculty they have acquired. This faculty consists in their pouring the astral body out of their own being into man's. They prepared themselves for this work during the Sun evolution, and during the time of rest between the Sun and Moon they transformed what had been prepared into the faculty alluded to. This influx lasts for a while, then one of the shorter intervals of rest sets in. After that the influx continues until the Lords of Form begin their activity. In consequence of the pouring of the astral body into man's being by the Lords of Motion, the latter acquires its first psychic qualities. It

begins to develop sensations in connection with the processes which take place in it through the possession of an etheric body, and which during the Sun evolution were still plant-like in nature; through these processes man's being now experiences pleasure and aversion. But it is nothing more than a constant inner ebb and flow of such pleasure and aversion, until the Lords of Form intervene. Then these changing feelings are so transformed that there appear in man's nature what may be regarded as the first signs of wishes and desires. The being strives after a repetition of what has once caused pleasure, and tries to avoid what has been felt as antipathetic. As, however, the Lords of Form do not give up their own nature to the human being, but merely let their forces stream in and out, desire is wanting in depth of feeling and independence. It is directed by the Lords of Form, and makes its appearance in an instinctive character.

The human physical body on Saturn was a heat body; on the Sun a condensation into the gaseous state, or into "air," has set in. Now as, during the Moon evolution, the astral element is poured in, and the physical part, at a definite moment, attains a further degree of condensation, it arrives at a state which may be compared with that of a liquid of our own day. In accordance with the usage of occult science this state

may be called "water." But by this term is not meant the water we now have, but every liquid form in existence. The physical human body now gradually assumes a form composed of three kinds of material structures. The densest is a "water body"; through this flow air currents; and through these two there further passes heat-activity.

Now all the organisms do not attain full, adequate maturity during the Sun stage. Therefore there are organisms found on the Moon which are only at the Saturn stage, and others which have but reached the Sun stage. In this way two other kingdoms arise by the side of the normally evolved human kingdom. One consists of beings which have stopped short at the Saturn stage, and therefore have only a physical body, which even on the Moon is not yet able to become the vehicle of an independent etheric body. This is the lowest of the Moon kingdoms. A second consists of beings which have been left behind at the Sun stage, and which are therefore not mature enough on the Moon to incorporate within themselves an independent astral body. These form a kingdom between the one just mentioned and the regularly progressing human kingdom.

But there is still something else taking place: the substances with only heat forces and those with only air forces permeate also the human

beings. Thus it happens that the latter have within them on the Moon a Saturnian and a solar nature. In this way a kind of cleavage has taken place in human nature; and by means of this division, something very momentous is called forth within the Moon evolution after the activity of the Lords of Form has begun. A cleavage in the celestial body of the Moon begins to be prepared for. One part of its substances and beings separates from the other; two heavenly bodies are formed out of one. One of these becomes the abode of certain higher beings who were previously more closely connected with the undivided celestial body; while the other is occupied by human beings, the two lower kingdoms described above, and certain higher beings who did not pass over to the first celestial body.

The first heavenly body, with the higher beings, appears like a newly born but refined Sun; the other is really the new formation, the "old Moon." The regenerated Sun, on going out, takes with it only "heat" and "air" of the substances which have been formed on the Moon; on what is left as the Moon there is the liquid condition as well as the other two substances. By this separation it comes about that the beings which have withdrawn with the newborn Sun are not, in the first instance; hampered in their further evolution by the denser Moon beings. Thus they are able to continue their own progress without hindrance.

But by this means they acquire so much more power that they are able now, from their Sun, to influence the Moon beings. These, also acquire thereby new possibilities of evolution. Most important of all, the Lords of Form are still in union with them. These confirm the appetites and the desire-nature, and this also is gradually expressed in a further condensation of the physical human body. What was previously nothing but liquid in that body assumes a densely viscid form; and the air and heat organisms are correspondingly condensed. Similar processes take place in the two lower kingdoms.

The result of the separation of the Moon-body from the Sun-body is that the former bears the same relation to the latter as the Saturn-body once did to the whole cosmic evolution surrounding it. The Saturn-sphere was formed out of the body of the "Lords of Will" (the Thrones). From its substance there streamed back into cosmic space everything experienced in its periphery by the above-mentioned spiritual beings. And this radiation by degrees awakened independent life, by means of the following processes. All evolution is indeed due to the fact that independent being is first separated from the life surrounding it; that next the environment is impressed, as by reflection, upon the being separated off, and that then this detached being independently evolves further. Thus was the

Moon-body detached from the Sun-body, at first reflecting the life of the latter. If nothing further had then happened, the following cosmic process would have taken place. There would have been a Sun-body in which spiritual beings adapted to that body would have lived through their experiences in the elements of heat and air.

Set over against this Sun-body would have been a Moon-body, in which other beings of like nature with the Sun-beings would have undergone their experiences in the conditions of heat, air, and water. The progress from the Sun-evolution to that of the Moon would have consisted in the Sun-beings having their own life, after the events on the Moon, reflected before them as in a mirror, and in their being able to enjoy it, which was impossible to them during the Sun incarnation. But evolution did not remain at this stage. Something happened of the deepest significance for all evolution to come. Certain beings who were adapted to the Moon-body, take possession of the element of will (the heritage of the Thrones) which was at their disposal, and by its means develop a life of their own, which takes shape independently of the Sun-life. Alongside of those Moon experiences which are entirely under the influence of the Sun, there arises independent Moon experiences,—as it were, states of rebellion or mutiny against the Sun-beings. And the various kingdoms which

had arisen on the Sun and Moon, first and foremost the kingdom of man's ancestors, are drawn into these conditions. In this way the Moon-body contains within it, spiritually and materially, two kinds of life: one that is in inner union with the Sun-life, and another which has "fallen away" from it and goes its own way independently. This division into a twofold life appears in all subsequent events of the Moon incarnation.

What presents itself to clairvoyant consciousness in this period of evolution may be realized from the following pictures. The whole basic composition of the Moon is formed of a half-living substance, which at one time is moving sluggishly, at another, quickly. It is not yet a mineral mass in the sense of being made up of the rocks and constituents of the earth on which contemporary man walks about. We might call it a kingdom of plant-minerals, only we have to imagine that the main body of the Moon consists of this plant-mineral substance, as the earth to-day consists of rocks, earth, and other substances. Just as now we have towering masses of rock, so there were then harder portions embedded in the Moon's bulk; these may be compared with hard wooden structures or formations of horn; and as plants now arise out of mineral soil, so was the surface of the Moon covered and penetrated by the second kingdom, consisting of a kind of plant-animals. Their

substance was softer than the general mass of the Moon, and more mobile. This kingdom extended over the other, like a viscous sea.

• Man himself at that time may be called animal-man. He had in his nature the component parts of the other two kingdoms; but his being was thoroughly interpenetrated by an etheric and an astral body, upon which there worked the forces of higher beings issuing from the severed Sun. His form was thus brought to greater perfection. While the Lords of Form were giving him a frame which adapted him for Moon life, the Sun-Spirits were giving him a nature which lifted him beyond that life. He had the power of ennobling his own nature with the faculties given him by these Spirits,—in fact, of raising what was akin to the lower kingdoms to a higher level.

As seen spiritually, the events now under consideration may be described in the following way. Man's ancestor had been brought to greater perfection by beings who had fallen away from the Sun kingdom. This improvement extended especially to everything that could be experienced in the element of water. Over that element the Sun-beings, who were rulers in the elements of heat and air, had less influence. The consequence of this was that in the organism of man's ancestor two kinds of beings made themselves felt. One part of the organism was wholly interpenetrated by the influences of the

Sun-beings. In the other part, the rebellious Moon-beings were operative. • Owing to this, the latter part was more independent than the former. In the former there could only arise states of consciousness in which the Sun-beings lived; in the latter there lived a kind of universal consciousness, as had been specially the case on Saturn, only now it was on a higher plane.

Man's ancestor consequently seemed to himself an "image of the universe," whereas his "Sun-part" felt itself only an "image of the Sun." The two beings now came to a kind of conflict in man's nature. A settlement of this conflict was brought about by the influence of the Sun-being, through which the material organism which made the independent universal consciousness possible, was rendered frail and perishable. From time to time this part of the organism had to be separated off. During and some time after the separation, man's ancestor was a being wholly dependent on the Sun influence. His consciousness became less independent; he lived within it, entirely surrendered to Sun-life. Then the independent Moon portion was once more renewed. After some time this process was always repeated. Thus man's ancestor lived on the Moon in alternating conditions of clearer and duller consciousness; and the alternation was accompanied by a change of his being in a material respect. From time to

time he laid aside his Moon-body and resumed it later. Seen physically, great variety appears in the kingdoms of the Moon that have been mentioned.

The mineral-plants, plant-animals, and animal-men are differentiated into groups. This will be understood when it is borne in mind that in consequence of organisms being left behind at each of the earlier stages of evolution, forms possessing most varied qualities were incorporated. There are organisms still showing the elementary Saturnian qualities, others of the middle period of that world, others of its end. A similar statement is true of all the stages of the Sun evolution.

As organisms related to the evolving planet are left behind, this is also the case with certain beings connected with that evolution. Through the gradual progress of development up to the Moon period, many grades of such beings have already arisen. There are the Sons of Personality who never attained their human stage on the Sun; but there are also present some who have made up on the Moon for lost time and become human. A number of the Sons of Fire, who should have attained humanity on the Sun, have also been left behind. Now, just as during the Sun evolution certain of the Sons of Personality withdrew from the Sun and caused the reappearance of Saturn as a separate body, so it also happens that

in the course of the Moon evolution the beings described above separate and form individual celestial bodies. So far we have mentioned only the separation into Sun and Moon; but other world-organisms detached themselves, for the reasons already given, from the Moon body which made its appearance after the great interval between the Sun and Moon.

After a certain time we have to consider a system of heavenly bodies of which the farthest progressed, as can easily be seen, must be called the new Sun. And just such a bond of attraction as was described above as existing between the backward Saturn kingdom and the Sons of Personality on the new Saturn, is formed between each of these bodies and the corresponding Moon-beings. It would take us much too far to follow up in detail all the celestial bodies that come into existence. It must suffice to have pointed out the reason why a succession of them arises by degrees from the undivided world-organism which appears as Saturn at the beginning of human evolution.

After the intervention on the Moon of the Lords of Form, evolution proceeds for a while in the manner described. At the end of this time there is again a pause. While it lasts, the coarser portions of the three Moon kingdoms are in a sort of resting state, but the finer parts, in particular the human astral body, extricate themselves

from those coarser organisms. They reach a condition in which the higher forces of exalted Sun-beings are able to act upon them very strongly. After the interval of rest they again interpenetrate those parts of man's being which are composed of the coarser substances. Because they received such mighty forces during the pause—in a free state—they are able to make those coarser substances ripe for the influence to be exercised upon them after a certain time by the Sons of Personality and the Sons of Fire, who have progressed normally.

In the meantime these Sons of Personality have raised themselves to a level on which they have the "consciousness of inspiration." Here they are not only able—as was the case with clairvoyant picture-consciousness—to observe in images the inner state of other beings but to apprehend the inner nature itself of those beings, as though in a spiritual language of sound. But the Sons of Fire have risen to that height of consciousness possessed on the Sun by the Sons of Personality. Both kinds of Spirits can by this means interpose in the maturing life of human nature. The Sons of Personality act on the astral body, the Sons of Fire on the etheric body, of man's being. The astral body thereby acquires the character of personality. It now not only experiences pleasure and pain, but refers them to itself. It has not yet arrived at a complete

The animal-plants appear only as condensed regular forms of this element, often differing little physically from their environment. The respiratory and nutritive processes are both active. It is like an absorption and emanation of heat. To clairvoyant observation it is as if, during those processes, organs opened and closed, through which a warming current passed in and out, and through which airy and watery substances were also carried in and out. And since man's nature at this stage of evolution already possesses an astral body, respiration and nutrition are accompanied by feelings, so that a sort of pleasure ensues when materials which promote the upbuilding of man's nature are taken in from without. Aversion is caused if injurious substances flow in, or even if they merely approach.

Just as during the Moon evolution the respiratory and the nutritive processes were closely connected, as has been described, so was the imaginative process in close connection with reproduction. No immediate effect was produced on any of the senses by the things and beings in the environment of Moon-humanity. The conception was, on the contrary, of such a kind that the presence of things and beings called up pictures in the dull, dreamy consciousness. These pictures were much more closely connected with the real nature of the environment than the present sense-perceptions, which show in colours,

ego-consciousness, that says to itself, "I am here"; but it feels itself upheld and protected by other beings in its environment. When looking, as it were, up to these, it is able to say, "This, my environment, keeps me alive."

The Sons of Fire now work upon the etheric body. Under their influence the movement of forces in that body becomes more and more one of an inner vital energy. What then results finds physical expression in a circulation of fluids and in phenomena of growth. The gaseous substances have become condensed into liquid substances; we may speak of a kind of nutritive process, in the sense that what is received from without becomes transformed and elaborated within. Perhaps if we think of something intermediate between nutrition and respiration in the present meaning of the terms, we may get an idea of what then happened in this direction. The nutritive matter was drawn from the animal-plant kingdom by the human being. We must think of those animal-plants as floating or swimming—or even almost fixed—in an element surrounding them, as fish of the present time live in water, or land animals in air. Yet the element is neither water nor air in the present sense, but something midway between the two, a kind of thick vapour in which the most heterogeneous substances move hither and thither, as though dissolved, in currents flowing in all directions.

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sounds, scents, and so on, only the outward side of beings.

In order to get a clearer idea of the human consciousness on the Moon, let us imagine human beings immersed in the vaporous environment described above. The most varied processes are enacted in this vapour-element. Materials unite, substances break asunder one from the other; some parts become condensed, others attenuated. All this comes to pass in such a way that human beings do not see or hear anything of it directly, but it calls up images in their consciousness. These may be compared with the images of our present dream-consciousness. It is somewhat the same as when an object falls to the ground, and a sleeping man does not discern what has really happened but perceives some image of it: for instance, he thinks that a shot has been fired. But the pictures in the Moon-consciousness are not arbitrary, as is the case with such dream-pictures; it is true they are symbols, not representations, but they correspond with outer events. A definite outer event can call up only a quite definite image. The Moon-being is therefore in a position to regulate his conduct by means of these images, as contemporary man does by means of his perceptions. We must nevertheless be careful to notice that conduct regulated by perception is governed by choice, whereas action under the influence of the images we have

described seems to result from a dim instinct.

It is by no means as if only outer physical processes became perceptible through this picture-consciousness, but through the images there are also represented the spiritual beings who rule behind the physical facts, and the activities of those beings. Thus the Lords of Personality become visible, so to speak, in what concerns the animal-plant kingdom; the Sons of Fire appear behind and in the mineral-plant beings; and the Sons of Life appear as beings whom man is able to imagine unconnected with anything physical, —whom he sees, as it were, as etheric-psychic organisms.

Though these images of the Moon-consciousness were not representations, but only symbols of outer things, they nevertheless had a much more important effect on the inner nature of man than the images now caused by perception. They were able to set the whole inner being in motion and activity. The inner events were shaped in conformity with them. They were genuine formative forces. Man's being became what those formative forces made it; it became, to a certain extent, a representation of the events of its consciousness.

The further evolution progresses in this manner, the more does it result in the coming to pass of a deeply incisive change in man's being. The power issuing from the images in the consciousness

gradually becomes unable to extend over the whole human bodily frame, which thereupon divides into two parts, or two natures. Members are formed subject to the shaping influence of the picture-consciousness, and they become to a great extent a copy of that life of imagination in the way just described. But other organs escape such an influence. They are, as it were, too dense, too much determined by other laws, to regulate themselves by the images of consciousness. These withdraw from the human influence; but they come under another, that of the exalted Sun-beings themselves. A period of rest, however, is first seen to precede this stage of evolution. During this pause the Sun-Spirits are gathering force to influence the Moon-beings under quite new circumstances.

After this term of rest, man's being is distinctly divided into two natures. One of these is withdrawn from the self-dependent action of the picture-consciousness; it assumes a more definite form, and comes under the influence of forces which, though issuing from the Moon body, only come into existence there through the influence of the Sun-beings. This part of human nature shares more and more the life which is stimulated by the Sun: the other part rises like a kind of head out of the first one. It is flexible, can move itself, and takes shape in conformity with the life of dull human consciousness. Yet the two

parts are closely connected with each other; they send one another their juices, and members extend from one of them into the other.

A significant harmony is now attained by the working out, in the course of the time during which all this has happened, of such a connection between the Sun and Moon as is in keeping with the tendency of this evolution. It has already been intimated in a former passage that the beings who are progressing detach their celestial bodies from the general cosmic mass by the stages of evolution through which they pass. They pour out, as it were, forces in conformity with which materials are organized. The Sun and Moon have thus parted from each other, as was necessary for the preparation of the right abodes for the beings appropriate to them. But this determination of material and its forces by the Spirit is carried very much farther. The beings themselves condition as well certain movements of the heavenly bodies, and definite revolutions of them around each other. In consequence, those bodies come to occupy variable positions with regard to each other. And if the position or situation of one body with regard to another is altered, the effects of their respective inhabitants on each other also change. It has thus happened with the Sun and Moon. By the motion of the Moon around the Sun, which has arisen, human beings come, periodically, at one time more into the sphere of the

Sun's influence; at another time they may turn away from the Sun, and are then thrown more on their own resources. The movement is a consequence of the "fall" of certain Moon-beings, as described above; and of the settlement of the conflict which was thereby brought about. It is the physical expression of the new relation of spiritual forces created by this falling away. The consequence of the rotation of the one sphere round the other is that the beings inhabiting these heavenly bodies experience the alternating conditions of consciousness above described. We may put it thus, that the Moon alternately turns its life toward the Sun and away from it. There is a Sun period and a planetary period, in the latter of which the Moon-beings evolve on a side of the Moon which is turned away from the Sun. Of course there is other movement going on in the Moon in addition to planetary movements. That is to say, clairvoyant consciousness, on looking back, can plainly see the Moon-beings wandering around their own planet, at quite regular periods of time. Thus at certain times they seek localities where they can give themselves up to the Sun influence; at other periods they wander to places where they are not subject to that influence, and where they can, as it were, reflect upon themselves.

In order to complete the picture that is to be drawn of these events, we must further notice

that the Sons of Life attain their human stage during this period. Man's senses, the beginnings of which already existed on Saturn, cannot even yet, on the Moon, be used for his own perception of external objects. But at the Moon stage those senses become the instruments of the Sons of Life, who make use of them in order to perceive through them. Those senses, belonging to the physical human body, thereby enter into reciprocal relations with the Sons of Life, by whom they are not only used but improved.

Now there sets in a change of circumstances, in consequence of the changing relations of the Sun to human nature. Things so shape themselves that when man's being is subject to the Sun influence it is more given up to the world in general and its phenomena than to itself. At such times it feels the greatness and glory of the universe; it, so to speak, absorbs them. Then the exalted beings who dwell on the Sun are influencing the Moon, which again influences human beings. This influence, however, does not extend to the whole of man, but chiefly to those parts which have thrown off the influence of their own picture-consciousness. The physical and etheric bodies especially reach at this time a certain largeness and shape. On the other hand, the phenomena of consciousness retire into the background. But when human life is turned away from the Sun it is occupied with its own

nature; an inner activity begins, especially in the astral body. The outer form, on the contrary, becomes more insignificant, and less perfect in form.

Thus during the Moon evolution there are two states of consciousness to be clearly distinguished, and alternating with each other: duller during the Sun period and clearer during the time when life is left more to its own resources. The first state is certainly duller, but on the other hand it is more unselfish; man then lives a life more devoted to the outer world, to the universe. It is an alternation of states of consciousness, which on the one hand may be compared with the alternation of sleeping and waking in contemporary man, as well as with his life between birth and death; on the other hand, it may be compared with the more spiritual existence between death and a new birth. The awakening on the Moon, when the Sun period gradually ceases, might be described as intermediate between the awakening of contemporary man each morning, and his being born. And in the same way the gradual dulling of consciousness at the approach of the Sun period resembles a middle condition between falling asleep and dying. For on the old Moon there was not yet such a consciousness of birth and death as man now possesses. Man gave himself up to the enjoyment of the universe in a kind of Sun life. During this period he was

carried beyond his own life; he lived more spiritually. We can attempt only an approximate description, one by way of comparison, of what man experienced during such times. He felt as though the forces of the universe were streaming into him, and coursing through him. He was as though intoxicated with the harmonies of the cosmos, with which he coexisted.

At such times his astral body was as if set free from the physical body; also part of the etheric body went with it out of the physical body. This organism, consisting of the astral and etheric bodies, was like a delicate, wonderful musical instrument, from the strings of which resounded the mysteries of the universe. And the members of that part of human nature on which consciousness had but a slight influence were shaped in accordance with the harmonies of the universe. For the Sun-beings worked in those harmonies. Thus was this part of man given its form by the spiritual sounds of the universe; and at the same time the alternation between the clearer state of consciousness during the Sun period, and the duller one, was not so abrupt as that between the waking state and that of absolutely dreamless sleep in contemporary man. It is true the picture-consciousness was not so clear as the present waking consciousness; but on the other hand, the other consciousness was not so dull as the dreamless sleep of the present day.

There was thus a kind of dim echo of the "music of the spheres" in the physical body of man, and in that part of his etheric body which was still united with the physical body. At the time when, so to speak, the Sun did not shine on humanity, the picture-conceptions replaced these harmonies in consciousness. There was then a revival of those members of the physical and etheric bodies which were in the immediate power of the consciousness. On the other hand, the other parts of human nature, on which the transforming powers of the Sun were not working, went through a kind of hardening or drying process. When the Sun period again drew near, the old bodies decayed; they separated from man's being, and as though from the grave of his old bodily form there went forth the human being, newly formed inwardly, even if outwardly still insignificant looking.

A renewal of the life-process had taken place. By the operation of the Sun-beings and their harmonies, the newborn body shaped itself again in its perfection, and the process described above was repeated. Man felt that renewal as if it were the putting on of new garments. The kernel of his being had not passed through an actual birth or death; it had only passed from a spiritual tone-consciousness, in which it was given up to the outer world, to a picture-consciousness, in which it was more turned in on

itself, on its inner being. It had cast its skin. The old body had become useless; it was thrown off and renewed. At the same time we get a more exact indication of what has been characterized above as a kind of reproduction, and of which it was remarked that it is closely connected with perception. Man's being has brought forth its like with respect to certain parts of the physical and etheric bodies. There does not, however, come into existence a being entirely different from its parent, but the kernel of the parent-being passes to the child. No new being arises, but the same one in a new form.

Thus the Moon human being experiences a change of consciousness. When the Sun period draws near, his pictured images become dimmer and dimmer, and blissful ecstasy takes possession of him; the harmonies of the universe resound in his inner being, which is at peace. Toward the end of this time the images in the astral body begin to be animated; it begins to be more conscious of, and to feel, itself. Man experiences something like an awakening from the bliss and tranquillity in which he was wrapped during the Sun period.

But at the same time another important experience begins. In the new illumination of the pictures of consciousness, man sees himself as though enveloped in a cloud, which has descended on him out of the universe as though

it were a being. And he feels as if that being belonged to him, as if it were complementary to his own nature; he feels as if it were what gives him his existence, as if it were his ego. That being is one of the Sons of Life. Man feels toward him somewhat like this: "I have lived in this being, even when I was given up to the glory of the universe in the Sun period,—only then he was not visible to me; now he is." And it is from the strength of that Son of Life that the influence proceeds which man exercises on his own bodily form during the sunless period. Then when the Sun period again approaches, man feels as if he himself became one with the Son of Life. Even if man does not see him, he nevertheless feels closely united with him.

Now the connection with the Sons of Life was such that not every individual human being had a Son of Life to himself, but an entire group of people felt such a being belonging to them. People on the Moon lived thus, divided into groups, and each group felt in a Son of Life the "group-ego" they had in common. The etheric bodies in each group took a special form, and in this way the difference between the groups made itself felt. But as the physical bodies shaped themselves in conformity with the etheric bodies, the differences of the latter were also stamped upon the former; and the individual human groups appeared as so many varieties

of people. If the Sons of Life looked down on the human groups belonging to them, they saw themselves to a certain extent reproduced in the individual human beings. And in this way they felt their own individuality. They were, so to speak, reflected in those people. And in this way they felt the possession of their own ego. They reflected themselves, as it were, in the human beings. This was indeed the mission of the human senses at that time. It has already been shown that the senses did not as yet effect any perception of objects. But they reflected the nature of the Sons of Life. What those Sons of Life perceived through the reflection, gave them their "ego-consciousness." What was aroused in the human astral body by the reflection were the dull, dim pictures of the Moon-consciousness. The effect of that action carried out conjointly with the Sons of Life brought about the conditions for the nervous system in the physical body. The nerves appear, one might say, as continuations of the senses, in conformity with the inner nature of the human body.

It is evident, from this description, in what manner the three kinds of Spirits, of Personality, of Fire, and those of Life, act upon Moon-humanity. If we watch the chief or middle period of the Moon evolution, we may say that the Sons of Personality are at that time implanting in the human astral body self-dependence

and the character of personality. It is owing to this fact that during those times when the sun is not shining on man his attention can be turned inwards, and he is able to work at the shaping of his own form.

The Sons of Fire are occupied with the etheric body, as far as the latter becomes imprinted with the independent formation of man's being. Through their means it comes to pass that human beings are again conscious of themselves, as such, every time the body is renewed. Thus a kind of memory is bestowed on the etheric body through the Sons of Fire.

The Sons of Life act on the physical body in such a way that it is able to become the expression of the astral body which has now become independent. They thus make it possible for the physical body to become a physiognomic copy of its astral body. On the other hand, higher spiritual beings, in particular the Lords of Form and of Motion, interpose in the physical and etheric bodies, as far as these are being developed, during the Sun periods, apart from the independent astral body. Their intervention comes from the Sun, in the manner described above.

Under the influence of such facts, man's being grows toward maturity, so as gradually to develop in itself the germ of the Spirit-Self, just as during the second half of the Saturn evolution it developed the germ of the Spirit-Man, and, on the

Sun, that of the Life-Spirit. Thereby all the Moon conditions are changed. Human beings have not only become more and more noble and refined through successive transformations and renewals, but they have also gained in power. For this reason the picture-consciousness was more and more maintained during the Sun periods. It also gained influence in the formation of the physical and etheric bodies, which hitherto had been formed entirely by the action of the Sun-beings.

What took place on the Moon by means of human beings and the Spirits connected with them became more and more like that which had formerly been effected by the Sun with its higher beings. The consequence was that those Sun-beings were able to withdraw more and more, and to concentrate their forces to advantage on their own evolution. By this means the Moon became, after a time, mature enough to be again united with the Sun. To spiritual vision, these occurrences take place as follows: The rebellious Moon-beings are gradually overcome by the Sun-Spirits, and compelled thenceforward to submit to them so far that their actions work in with those of the Sun-Spirits, to whom they are subordinate. It is true that this happened only after the lapse of long ages, during which the Moon periods had become shorter and shorter, and the Sun periods longer and longer. Now

there again comes an evolution during which the Sun and Moon form *one* world-organism. By this time the physical human body has become quite etheric.

When it is said that the physical body has become etheric, it must not be imagined that under such circumstances there is no physical body existing. What was formed as a physical body during the Saturn, Sun, and Moon periods, still exists. In this matter it is important to recognize the physical element where it is externally and physically manifested. It may also be present where it shows outwardly an etheric or even an astral form. We must distinguish between the outward appearance and the inner law. What is physical may become etheric and astral, and at the same time retain in itself the physical law. Things happen thus when the physical body of man has attained a certain degree of perfection on the Moon. It becomes etheric in form.

But when clairvoyant observation, which can perceive such things, is directed toward an etheric body of this kind, that body is seen to be pervaded by physical, not etheric, laws. The physical element has in this case been taken into the etheric world, there to rest and to be nursed as though in a mother's tender care. Later it again emerges in a physical form, but at a higher stage. If Moon-humanity had kept its physical

body in the coarse physical form, the Moon would never have been able to unite itself with the Sun. By accepting the etheric form, the physical body becomes more closely related to the etheric body, and by this means can again be more closely interpenetrated with those parts of the etheric and astral bodies which had perforce to withdraw from it during the Sun periods of the Moon evolution. Man, who appeared as a being with two natures during the separation of Sun and Moon, again becomes an undivided being. The physical part becomes more psychic; on the other hand, what is psychic becomes more closely connected with what is physical.

Now the Sun-Spirits, into whose immediate sphere this uniform, undivided human being has come, are able to act upon it in quite a different manner from their previous influence from without on the Moon. Man is now in a more psychic-spiritual environment. Owing to this, the Lords of Wisdom are able to effect something momentous. They imbue and inspire him with wisdom. He thereby becomes in a certain sense an independent soul. And to the influence of these beings is added that of the Lords of Motion. They act principally on the astral body, so that under their influence it produces psychic activity, and an etheric body filled with wisdom. The latter is the foundation of what has been described above as the rational or intellectual soul

in contemporary man, whereas the astral body inspired by the Lords of Motion is the germ of the sentient soul. And because all this is effected in man's being in his progressed condition of independence, these germs of the rational and sentient soul appear as the expression of the Spirit-Self. In this connection the mistake must not be made of thinking that at this period of evolution the Spirit-Self was something separate from the intellectual and sentient souls. The latter are only the expression of the Spirit-Self, which signifies their higher unity and harmony.

It is especially significant that the Lords of Wisdom intervene at this period in the manner described. For they do this not only with regard to humanity but also for the benefit of the other kingdoms which have been elaborated on the Moon. On the reunion of Sun and Moon these lower kingdoms are drawn into the Sun sphere. Everything in them which was physical becomes etheric. There are, therefore, mineral-plants and plant-animals now in the Sun, just as there is humanity there. But those other creatures are still endowed with their own laws of being. They therefore feel like strangers in their environment. They come upon the scene with a nature but little in harmony with their surroundings. But as they have become etheric, the influence of the Lords of Wisdom may also extend to them. Everything which has come

from the Moon into the Sun now becomes pervaded with the forces of the Lords of Wisdom. Hence what is developed out of the Sun-Moon organism during this period of evolution may be called in occult science the "Cosmos of Wisdom."

When, therefore, our earth system appears, after an interval of rest, as the successor of this Cosmos of Wisdom, all the beings newly alive on the earth, developing out of their Moon-germs, prove to be filled with wisdom. Then the reason comes to light why a mortal, when reflecting upon the things he sees around him, is able to discover wisdom in their very nature. The wisdom in each leaf of a plant, in every bone in animals and men, in the marvellous structure of the brain and heart, fills us with admiration. If man requires wisdom to understand things, and therefore gathers wisdom from them, this shows that there is wisdom in the things themselves. For however much pains man took to understand things by means of wise conceptions, he could not draw any wisdom from them unless it had first been put into them. If any one tries by means of wisdom to understand things which he does not think have had any wisdom bestowed on them, he may as reasonably believe that he can empty water out of a glass into which it has not first been poured. As will be shown later in this

book, the earth is the "old Moon" risen again. And it appears as an organism full of wisdom, because it was pervaded by the Lords of Wisdom and their forces during the epoch that has been described.

It will be easily understood that this description of the Moon conditions could take account only of certain temporary forms of evolution. It was necessary to pause at certain things in the progress of events, and single them out for delineation. It is true that this kind of description gives only isolated pictures, and it may, for this reason, be regretted that in the foregoing account the evolutionary scheme was not brought down to a system of precise and definite conceptions. But in the face of such an objection it may be well to point out that the description was intentionally given in less clearly defined outlines. For it is not here of so much consequence to give speculative ideas and to construct theories, as to represent what really passes before the spiritual eyes of clairvoyant consciousness, when looking back upon these events. With regard to the Moon evolution this cannot be done in such clear and defined outlines as are visible to earthly perceptions. In the Moon period we are mainly concerned with variable, changing impressions, with shifting, moving pictures and their transitory stages. We have, moreover, to bear in mind that we

are contemplating an evolution continuing through long, long periods of time, and that out of all it offers it is possible to seize upon only momentary pictures and fix them for delineation.

The Moon period actually reached its highest point at the time when the astral body, implanted in man, has brought him so far along the evolutionary path that his physical body affords the Sons of Life the possibility of attaining their human stage. Man has then attained all that this epoch can give him for himself, that is to say, of benefit to his inner nature on the upward path. The following, or second, half of the Moon evolution may therefore be termed the "ebb tide," or wane. But even during this ebb we see a most important thing taking place in this epoch with regard to man's environment, and even as regards himself. It is now that wisdom is implanted in the Sun-Moon body. It has been shown that during the ebb tide the germs of the intellectual and sentient souls are implanted. But the development of these, also of the self-conscious soul, and with it the birth of the ego—the free self-consciousness—will not ensue until the earth period.

At the Moon stage the rational and sentient souls have as yet nothing of an appearance that would indicate their being used by human beings as a means of expression; rather do they appear to be instruments of those Sons of Life who

belong to humanity. Were we to describe the feeling of the human dweller on the Moon in this respect, we should have to say that he feels this: "The Son of Life lives in and through me; he surveys through me the environment of the Moon; in me he ponders over the things and beings of that environment." The Moon human being feels himself overshadowed by the Son of Life, and looks upon himself as the instrument of that higher being. During the time of the separation of Sun and Moon he felt a greater measure of independence when the Sun was turned away from him; but at the same time he also felt as if the ego belonging to him, which had disappeared from the picture-consciousness during the Sun period, now became visible. It was, for Moon-humanity, what may be described as a change in the states of consciousness, so that the Moon-being had this feeling: "In the Sun period my ego wafts me away into higher regions, into the presence of exalted beings, and when the Sun disappears it descends with me into lower worlds."

The actual Moon evolution was preceded by a preparatory stage. In a certain way the Saturn and Sun evolutions were recapitulated. Now, after the reunion of Sun and Moon, and also during what we have termed the ebb tide, two epochs may be distinguished one from the other. In the course of these, even physical condensation

occurs up to a certain point. Therefore spiritual-psychic conditions of the Sun-Moon organism alternate with those of a more physical nature. In such physical epochs human beings and those of the lower kingdoms appear as if they were preparing in stiff, and not yet self-reliant, forms the type of what they were to become in a more independent fashion during the earth period. We may therefore speak of two preparatory epochs in the Moon evolution, and of two others during the ebb tide, or waning. In occult science such epochs may be termed cycles.¹ In that period which follows the two preparatory epochs, and precedes those of the wane, or ebb tide—that is to say, during the time of the separation of the Moon—three epochs can again be distinguished. The middle period is the time when the Sons of Life reached the human level. It is preceded by a period in which all conditions lead up to that crowning event; and it is followed by one which may be called a time of adaptation and of perfecting the new creations.

In this way the middle period of the Moon evolution is again divided into three epochs, which, with the two preparatory periods and the two when the tide is ebbing, make up seven Moon cycles, or rounds. It may therefore be

¹In current theosophical literature they are called "rounds." Yet, if we bear in mind the more graphic description already given, we shall guard against a too formal representation of such matters.

said that the whole Moon evolution passes through seven cycles, or rounds. Between them are intervals of rest, which have been repeatedly mentioned in the above description. Yet we approach the matter in its reality only by forbidding ourselves to think of any sudden transitions from periods of activity to those of rest. For instance, the Sun-beings little by little withdraw their activity from the Moon. A time begins for them which, viewed from without, appears to be their resting period, whereas intense, independent activity still continues on the Moon itself. Thus the active period of one kind of being repeatedly extends into the resting time of another. If we take account of such things we may speak of a rhythmic ascent and descent of forces in cycles. Indeed, similar divisions are to be recognized even within the seven Moon cycles mentioned. We may then call the whole Moon evolution one great cycle, or planetary chain (Planetenlauf); and the seven divisions or rounds within it, "small" cycles; and again, the separate parts of these, "smaller" cycles. This systematic arrangement into seven times seven divisions is also noticeable in the Sun evolution and indicated during the Saturn period. Yet we must bear in mind that the boundaries between the divisions are somewhat obliterated even in the Sun, and still more so in Saturn. These boundaries become more

and more defined the nearer evolution advances to the earth period.

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.At the close of the Moon evolution, which has been sketched in the foregoing pages, all the beings and forces connected with it enter upon a more spiritual form of existence. This is on quite a different level from that of the Moon period, and also from that of the earth evolution which follows. A being possessed of faculties so highly developed as to enable him to perceive all the details of the Moon and earth evolutions need not necessarily be able to see what happens during the interval between the two periods. For one possessing such vision, beings and forces would, at the end of the Moon period, disappear, as it were, into nothingness; and after an interval they would issue forth again from the dusky twilight of the "womb of worlds." Only a being endowed with considerably higher faculties would be capable of following up the spiritual events which take place during the interval.

When this interval is over, the beings who took part in the evolutionary processes on Saturn, Sun, and Moon reappear endowed with new faculties. The beings of a higher order than man have, by their former achievements, won the power of bringing forward man's evolution to a point at which he would be able to unfold in himself, during the earth period, a form of

consciousness which stands a step higher than the picture-consciousness he had possessed during the Moon period. But man must first be prepared to receive this gift.

During the Saturn, Sun, and Moon evolutions he incorporated within his being the physical, etheric, and astral bodies. But those principles were only gifted with such faculties and powers as qualified them to live with a picture-consciousness; the organs and forms by means of which they could attain to a cognizance of a world of outer sense-objects, such as is requisite for the earth stage, were still wanting. Just as the new plant unfolds only what is concealed in the seed originating from the old plant, so do the three principles of man's nature appear, at the beginning of the new stage of evolution, with such forms and organs as will enable them to develop only a picture-consciousness. It is necessary first to prepare them for the unfolding of a higher state of consciousness.

This takes place in three preliminary stages. During the first, the physical body is raised to a level at which it becomes able to undergo the necessary remodelling which is to serve as a basis for the objective consciousness. This is one of the preliminary stages of the actual earth evolution, and may be called a recapitulation of the Saturn period on a higher level. For during this period, as during the Saturn period,

higher beings are working only on the physical body. When the latter has progressed far enough in its evolution, all beings must first pass into a higher form of existence before the etheric body also can go forward. The physical body must, as it were, be recast, in order to be able, when further developing, to receive the more highly constituted etheric body. After this interval devoted to a higher form of existence, there occurs a kind of recapitulation of the Sun evolution on a higher level, for the purpose of shaping the etheric body. And after another interval, a similar thing happens for the astral body, by means of a recapitulation of the Moon evolution.

Let us now turn our attention to the evolutionary processes taking place after the close of the third recapitulation described. All beings and forces have passed again into a state of spiritualization. During that state they ascended into higher worlds. The lowest of the worlds, in which some indication of them may still be perceived during this term of spiritualization, is that in which contemporary man sojourns between death and a new birth. These are the regions of the spirit-world. Thence the beings and forces gradually descend again into lower worlds. Before the physical earth evolution begins they have so far descended that their lowest manifestations are to be seen in the astral or psychic world.

Everything human existing at that period is

still in its astral form. In order to understand this condition of humanity, attention should be paid especially to the fact that though man has within him the physical, etheric, and astral bodies, yet the physical and etheric bodies are not present in their own forms but in astral form. It is not physical form that makes the physical body physical, but the fact that it embodies physical laws, although possessing an astral form. It is a being in a psychic form with a physical law of existence. A similar thing is true of the etheric body.

To spiritual vision the earth at this stage of evolution appears at first as a heavenly body all soul and spirit, in which, therefore, even physical and living forces appear in a psychic form. In this world-organism everything which will subsequently be moulded into the creatures of the physical earth is contained in a germinal state. The globe is luminous; but its light is not yet such as could be seen by physical eyes, supposing even that they existed. The globe shines only in psychic light to the opened vision of the seer.

Something now takes place on this globe which may be called "condensation." The result of this is that a fiery form appears after a time in the midst of the psychic globe, such as Saturn was in its densest state. This fiery form is interpenetrated by the action of the various

beings who are taking part in the evolution. The reciprocal action which is to be observed between those beings and the planetary body is like a springing up from and a diving into the earth's fiery globe. Hence the earth's globe is not by any means a homogeneous substance, but has somewhat the character of an ensouled and spiritualized organism. The beings destined to become human on the earth in man's present form are as yet in a condition which renders them the least capable of sharing in this activity of plunging into the fiery globe. They remain almost entirely in the uncondensed environment. They are still living in the bosom of the higher spiritual beings. At this stage they come into contact with the fiery earth at only one point of their psychic form, and this causes one part of their astral form to be densified. Thereby earth life is kindled in them. They therefore still belong to psychic-spiritual worlds with regard to the greater part of their nature, but by coming into contact with the earth's fire, vital heat plays around them.

If we wish to draw a material, yet supersensible, picture of these human beings in the very beginning of the earth's evolution, we must imagine a psychic ovoid, or egg, contained within the circumference of the earth, and enclosed on its lower surface as an acorn is by its cup. The substance of the cup, however, consists solely

of heat or fire. The process of being enveloped by heat not only causes the kindling of life in human nature, but a change appears simultaneously in the astral body. In this body there becomes incorporated the first rough outline of what afterwards becomes the sentient soul. We may therefore say that man at this stage of his existence consists of the sentient soul, the astral body, the etheric body, and the physical body, which latter is formed out of fire. In the astral body there surge up and down those spiritual beings who are connected with human existence. Man feels himself bound to the earth-body by the sentient soul. He has therefore at this time a preponderating picture-consciousness, in which are manifested those spiritual beings in whose bosom he reposes; and the feeling of his own body seems to be merely a point within that consciousness. He looks down, so to speak, from the spiritual world upon an earthly possession, about which he feels: "That is yours."

Farther and farther does the condensation of the earth now proceed, and at the same time the differentiation of the various parts of man, as it has been described, becomes more and more defined. From a definite point of evolution onward, the earth is so far condensed that only part of it is fiery; another part has assumed a substantial shape, which may be termed "gas" or "air." A change also takes place now in man.

He is not only brought into contact with the heat of the earth, but the air substance is incorporated into his fire-body. And as heat kindled life in him, the air playing around him creates an effect within him which may be called (spiritual) sound. His etheric body begins to resound. Simultaneously, a part of the astral body becomes separated from the remainder; this part is the beginning of the rational soul which appears later.

In order to bring before our eyes what takes place in the human soul at this time, we must notice that the beings superior to man are surging up and down in the airy-fiery body of the earth. In the fire-heat it is at first the Sons of Personality who are of importance to man. And when man is stirred into life by the heat of the earth his sentient soul says to itself, "These are the Sons of Personality"; in the same way the beings called "Archangels" earlier in this book, in accordance with Christian esotericism, proclaim themselves in the air-body. It is their influences which man feels within himself as sound when the air plays around him. And the rational soul then says to itself, "These are the Archangels." Thus what man at this stage perceives, through his connection with the earth, is not as yet a collection of physical objects, but he lives in sensations of heat which rise up to him, and in sounds; in those heat currents and sound waves, however, he feels

the Sons of Personality and the Archangels. It is true that he cannot perceive those beings directly, but only, as it were, through a veil of heat and sounds. While these perceptions are penetrating from the earth into his soul, there continue to ascend and descend within it the images of those higher beings in whose tender care he feels himself to be.

Now evolution takes a further step, which is once more expressed in condensation. Watery substance is incorporated into the earth-body, so that the latter now consists of three parts,—igneous, aëriform, and aqueous. Before this happens, something of great importance takes place. An independent celestial body is split off from the fiery-aëriform earth; this new body becomes in its later development our present sun.¹ Previously, earth and sun had formed one body. After the sun has been split off, the earth still has at first everything within it which is in and on the present moon. The separation of the sun takes place because higher beings could not any longer use for their own evolution and for what they have to do for the earth, the material which has been condensed into water. They separate from the general mass of the earth the only substances useful to them, and fare forth to make a new abode for themselves in the Sun. Thence they

¹In the next few pages, Sun and Moon are printed with capital letters when the *old* evolutions are referred to, but are left "sun" and "moon" when the earth period is indicated.—*Translator*.

now work upon the earth from outside. Man, however, needs for his further evolution an environment in which matter becomes still more condensed.

With the incorporation of watery substance into the earth-planet a change also takes place in man. Henceforth not only does fire stream into him and air play around him, but watery substance is incorporated into his physical body. At the same time his ætheric part changes; that is, it is now felt by man as a fine light-body. Previously to this, man had felt currents of heat rising up to him from the earth, and air penetrating to him through sounds; now the watery element also penetrates his fiery-aëriform body, and he sees the watery influx and efflux as a dawn and a dying away of light. But a change has also begun in his soul. To the beginnings of the sentient and intellectual souls is added that of the self-conscious soul. The "Angels" work in the element of water; they are also the real creators of light. It seems to man as though they appeared to him in light.

The higher beings who were previously in the earth-planet itself, now influence it from the sun. On this account all effects produced on the earth are different. The human being chained to earth would no longer be able to feel the influence of the Sun-beings within him, if his soul were unceasingly turned toward the earth, from

which his physical body is taken. A change now appears in the conditions of human consciousness. At certain times the Sun-beings wrest the soul of man from his physical body, so that man is now alternately purely psychic, in the bosom of the Sun-beings, and, when united with the body, in a condition in which he receives earth influences. When in the physical body, heat currents stream up to him, air substances echo round him, water pours into and out of him. When man is out of his body the images of the higher beings in whose care he is, float through him.

The earth passes through two periods at this stage of its evolution. In one of these it can play around human souls with its substances, and invest them with bodies; in the other, the souls have withdrawn from it, and only the bodies are left: and the human beings are in a sleeping condition. It is speaking quite in conformity with the facts to say that in those times of a remote past the earth passed through a day and a night period. This is expressed in terms of physical space by saying that by means of the reciprocal action of the Sun-beings and the earth-beings, the earth is brought into a movement in relation with the sun; thus there is brought about the alternation of day and night periods described above. The day period is when the surface of the earth, on which man is evolving, is turned toward the sun; the night period, which

is the time when man leads a purely psychic existence, is when the earth's surface is turned away from the sun. Now it must not, of course, be imagined that in that far-off time the earth's motion around the sun was like its present motion. The conditions were still utterly different. But even at this early point it is useful to gather how the motions of the celestial bodies are due to the mutual relations of the spiritual beings inhabiting them. Spiritual-psychic causes produce in the celestial bodies positions and motions which allow the manifestation of spiritual conditions on the physical plane.

If our gaze were turned upon the earth during its night period, its body would appear like a corpse. For it consists to a great extent of the decaying bodies of those human beings whose souls are in another state of existence. The organized watery and aëriform structures of which human bodies were formed become disintegrated, and dissolve into the rest of the earth's substance. Only that part of man's body which was formed from the very beginning of earthly evolution by the coöperation of fire and the human soul, and which subsequently became denser and denser, continues to exist as an insignificant looking embryo. Now when the day period begins, the earth once more participates directly in the sun influence, and human souls press forward into the sphere of physical

life. They come into contact with the embryos, and cause them to spring up and assume an external form, which appears as a copy of man's psychic being. It is something like a delicate fertilization which then takes place between the human soul and the bodily embryo.

The souls thus embodied now begin once more to attract the aëriform and watery substances and incorporate them into their own bodies. Air is expelled and absorbed by the organized body; the first beginning of the later respiratory process. Water too is absorbed and expelled; the nutritive process in its original form has begun. But these processes are not yet perceived as external ones. A kind of external perception takes place in the soul only during the kind of fertilization we have described. Here the soul vaguely feels its awakening to physical existence when it comes in contact with the embryo which is held toward it from the earth. It then feels something which may be thus put into words: "This is my form." And such a feeling, which might even be called a dawning consciousness of self, abides with the soul all through its union with the physical body. But the soul still feels the process of absorbing air in quite a psychic and spiritual way, as an image, which appears in the form of tone-pictures surging up and down; these give form to the embryo which is being incorporated with them. The soul everywhere

feels itself in the midst of sound waves, and feels that it is fashioning the body in accordance with those tone forces. Thus are human forms developed at that stage of evolution. They cannot be observed in any external world by our present consciousness. They evolve like vegetable and flower forms of fine substance, but they are inwardly flexible and therefore appear like flowers waving in the wind.

During his earth period, man experiences the blissful feeling of being fashioned into such forms. The absorption of the watery parts is felt in the soul as an accession of force, or inward strengthening process. From without it appears as growth of the physical human structure. As the direct influence of the sun decreases, the human soul loses the power of controlling these processes. By degrees they are cast aside. Only those parts are left which allow the embryo above described to mature. But man leaves his body, and returns to the spiritual form of existence. (As it is not all parts of the earth's body that are employed in building up human bodies, we must not imagine that during the earth's night period it is composed exclusively of disintegrating corpses and embryos waiting to be awakened. All these are imbedded in other structures, which are formed out of the earth's substances. How matters stand with those structures will be explained later.)

But now the process of condensing the earth's

substance is continued. There is added to the watery element the solid or "earthly" substance ("earthly" in the sense of occult science). And when this happens man, too, during his earth period, begins to incorporate the earthly element into his body. As soon as this incorporation begins, the forces which the soul brings with it out of the disembodied state no longer have the same power as before. Previously, the soul had fashioned its body out of the igneous, aëriform, and watery elements, in accordance with the tones which resounded and the light-pictures which played around it. The soul cannot do this with regard to the solidified form. Other forces now interpose to shape it. What is left behind of man, when the soul withdraws from the body, is not only an embryo to be fanned into life by the returning soul, but a structure containing in itself reanimating power. The soul, at its departure, not only leaves its image behind on earth but sends down some of its animating power into that image.

Now on its reappearance on earth the soul alone no longer suffices to awaken the image to life; reanimation must take place in the image itself. The spiritual beings influencing the earth from the sun now uphold the reanimating force that is in the human body, even though man himself is not upon the earth. Thus, on its reincarnation, the soul is not only sensible of the sounds and light-pictures floating around, in which it feels the

beings next above it, but, through receiving the earthly element, it comes under the influence of those still higher beings who have taken up their abode on the sun. Previously, man felt that he belonged to the spiritual-psychic beings with whom he was united when free from the body. His ego was still within them. Now that ego confronts him during physical incarnation, quite as much as everything else which is around him during that period. Independent copies of the psychic-spiritual being of man were henceforward on the earth. These structures were of finer material than the present human body. For there was only an admixture of earthly portions in their finest state,—much in the same way as when man of the present day absorbs the finely distributed substances of an object through his organ of smell. Human bodies were like shadows. But as they were distributed over the whole earth they came under earth influences, which varied in their nature on different parts of the earth's surface. Whereas formerly the bodily copies corresponded to the human souls animating them, and on that account were essentially alike over the whole earth, differences now appeared between human forms. In this manner the way was prepared for what appeared later as differences of race.

When the human body became independent, the previous close union of mortals with the spiritual-psychic world was to a certain extent

formerly inhabiting the earth there came forth, through the coöperation within each other of the two forces, the embryo and the animating force, the new human form, their descendant. These descendants were now remoulded. In one group the animating power of the spiritual-psychic element was paramount; in another, the vitality of the embryo. This was caused by the weakening of the power of the solid element in consequence of the moon's leaving the earth. The influence of the two forces one upon the other now took place in *one* body, and it became slighter than it had been, and the descendant also became more fragile and refined. He entered the earth in a subtle condition, and only gradually incorporated more solid parts within himself. In this way the possibility of union with the body was once more given to the human soul returning to earth. It is true the soul no longer animated the body from without, for that animation took place on the earth itself; but it became united with the body, and enabled it to grow. Of course a certain limit was set to that growth. Through the separation of the moon, the human body had for a time become supple; but the more it continued to grow on the earth, the more did the solidifying forces get the upper hand. At length the share borne by the soul in the organization of the body grew ever less and less. The body became disintegrated when the soul ascended to spiritual-psychic modes of existence.

dissolved. Henceforward, when the soul left the body, the latter went on living something like a continuation of life. If evolution had continued to advance in this manner, the earth must have hardened under the influence of its solid constituents. To the eyes of the seer who looks back on those conditions, human bodies, when abandoned by their souls, appear to become more and more solidified. And after a time the human souls returning to earth would have found no available material with which to combine. All the substances available for man would have been used up in filling the earth with the indurated remains of incarnated beings.

Then an event took place which gave a new turn to the whole evolution. Everything in the solid earthly substance which could contribute to permanent induration was eliminated. At this point our present moon left the earth. And what had previously directly conducted to a permanent moulding of forms, now operated from the moon indirectly and in a diminished degree. The higher beings, on whom that moulding of forms depended, had resolved to let their influences no longer come to the earth from its interior, but from without. By this means there was brought about in the bodily structure of man a difference which must be called the beginning of the separation into a male and a female sex.

And from the finely constituted human forms

formerly inhabiting the earth there came forth, through the coöperation within each other of the two forces, the embryo and the animating force, the new human form, their descendant. These descendants were now remoulded. In one group the animating power of the spiritual-psychic element was paramount; in another, the vitality of the embryo. This was caused by the weakening of the power of the solid element in consequence of the moon's leaving the earth. The influence of the two forces one upon the other now took place in *one* body, and it became slighter than it had been, and the descendant also became more fragile and refined. He entered the earth in a subtle condition, and only gradually incorporated more solid parts within himself. In this way the possibility of union with the body was once more given to the human soul returning to earth. It is true the soul no longer animated the body from without, for that animation took place on the earth itself; but it became united with the body, and enabled it to grow. Of course a certain limit was set to that growth. Through the separation of the moon, the human body had for a time become supple; but the more it continued to grow on the earth, the more did the solidifying forces get the upper hand. At length the share borne by the soul in the organization of the body grew ever less and less. The body became disintegrated when the soul ascended to spiritual-psychic modes of existence.

The powers gradually acquired by man during the Saturn, Sun, and Moon evolutions may be traced taking part by degrees in human progress during the shaping of the earth as we have been describing it. The first part to be kindled by the earth's fire is the astral body, still containing within it the etheric and physical bodies in a state of solution. Then the astral body is organized into a more subtle astral part, the sentient soul, and into a grosser etheric part, which henceforward is in contact with the earth-element; when this occurs, the etheric or vital body, already shadowed forth, makes its appearance. And while the rational and self-conscious souls are being evolved in the astral man, there are incorporated into the etheric body those coarser parts which are susceptible to sound and light.

At the moment when the etheric body is still further densified, and from being a light-body becomes a fire- or heat-body, the stage of evolution has been reached at which, as described above, parts of the solid earth-element are incorporated into man. Because the etheric body has come down so far as to be condensed into fire, it is now able, by means of the forces of the physical body previously implanted in it, to combine with those substances of the physical earth which have been attenuated as far as the fire-state. But by itself it would no longer be able to introduce air substances also into the body which has meanwhile

become more solidified. Then, as indicated above, the higher beings dwelling on the sun interpose, and breathe air into the body. While man, by virtue of his past, is able of himself to become permeated with the earthly fire, higher beings direct the breath of air into his body. Before the etheric body was organized, it was able, as a receiver of sound, to direct the air current. It permeated the physical body with life. Now the physical body gets life from without. The result of this is that that life becomes independent of the psychic part of man. Man, on quitting the earth, leaves behind not only the embryo of his form, but a living image of himself. The Lords of Form now remain united with that image, and the life they have bestowed they transfer to man's descendants, when his soul has left the body. Thus comes about what may be called heredity, and when the human soul once more appears on earth it feels it is in a body animated by the life of its ancestors. It feels itself specially attracted to just that kind of body. In this way there is formed something like a *memory* of an ancestor with whom the soul feels itself to be one. This memory passes through the line of descendants in the form of a consciousness possessed in common. The ego flows down through the generations.

At this stage of evolution man, during his life on earth, was conscious of himself as an independent being. He felt the inner fire of his etheric

body to be combined with the external fire of the earth. He could feel as his ego the heat that was streaming through him. In those heat currents, interwoven with life, are to be found the first beginnings of the circulation of the blood. But in what flowed into him as air he did not quite feel his own being. Indeed, it was the forces of the higher beings we have described that were working in that air. But still there was left to him, within the air that flowed through him, that part of the forces which belonged to him by virtue of his previously formed etheric powers. In one part of those air currents he was master. And to that extent, it was not only the higher beings who were shaping him, but he himself. He formed the air parts of his being in accordance with the images of his astral body. While air was thus flowing into his body from without, a process which became the basis of respiration, part of the air was formed within him into an organism which became fixed in man, and was the basis of the later nervous system. Thus man at this period was connected with the external earth by heat and air.

On the other hand, he was not conscious of the introduction of the solid element into the earth. Although it contributed to his own embodiment, he could not directly perceive what was being supplied, but only through a dim consciousness in the image of the higher beings who were active

in the process. In the same kind of picture-form, as an expression of the beings above him, man had previously perceived the introduction of the fluid element into the earth. Through the densification of his earthly form the pictures have now undergone a change in his consciousness. The solid element has been mixed with the fluid. This incoming of the solid element must also be seen to be the work of higher beings operating from without. It is not possible for the human soul to have any longer the power of directing the supply, for that supply has now to serve his body, which is being built up from without. He would spoil its form if he were to direct the influx himself.

What therefore he conveys to himself from without appears to him to be directed by authoritative orders issuing from the higher beings who are at work on the shaping of his body. Man feels himself to be an ego; he has within him, as part of his astral body, his rational soul, through which he inwardly perceives, in the form of pictures, what is happening externally, and by means of which he permeates his delicate nervous system. He feels himself to be descended from ancestors, by virtue of the life flowing down through generations. He breathes that life, and feels it to be the effect of the higher beings who have been described, the Lords of Form. And he submits to them also as regards what is conveyed to him by their initiative from without for

his nourishment. What he finds most obscure is his origin as an individual. As to that, he only knows that he has been under the influence of the Lords of Form expressing themselves in earth-forces. In his relations with the outer world, man was guided and ruled. This comes into expression by his being conscious of spiritual and psychic activities operating behind his physical world. It is true that he does not see the spiritual beings in their own form, but he is conscious in his soul of sounds and colours. He knows, however, that it is the actions of spiritual beings that are realized through that world of images. What those beings communicate to him, comes to him in sounds; their manifestations appear to him in light-pictures.

The earth-man is most acutely conscious of himself by means of the images which come to him through the element of fire or heat. He can already distinguish between his own inner heat and the heat currents of the earth's periphery. In these latter are manifested the Sons of Personality. But man has only a dim consciousness of what is behind the currents of external heat. It is in those very currents that he feels the influence of the Lords of Form. When powerful effects of heat are produced in man's environment, the soul feels, "Spiritual beings are heating the earth's periphery; a spark has been detached from them, which is permeating my inmost being with heat."

In the light-effects man does not as yet distinguish between outer and inner quite in the same way. When, light-pictures emerge around him, they do not always produce the same feeling in the soul of the earth-man. There were times when he felt them as external images. This was during the period when he had just descended from the disembodied state into incarnation. It was the period of his growth on earth. As the time approached for the embryo to be formed into a new earth-being, those images faded, and man retained only something like inward memory-pictures of them. The actions of the Sons of Fire (Archangels) were contained in those light-pictures, which appeared to man to be the servants of the fire-spirits who sent down a spark into his own inner being. When their outer manifestations died away, man felt them inwardly in the form of images (memories). He felt himself united with their forces. And indeed he was so. For by means of what he had received from them, he was able to work upon the atmosphere surrounding him. This, under his influence, began to emit light.

It was a time when nature forces and human forces were not as yet separated from each other as they subsequently became. What happened on earth still emanated to a great extent from human forces. At that time any one viewing nature processes on the earth from outside, would

have seen in them not only something that is independent of man, but would have seen human forces within those processes. Sound-perceptions assumed a very different form to the earth-man. From the beginning of earth-life they had been heard as outer sounds. Whereas, up to the middle of earthly existence, air-pictures were perceived from without, external sounds could be heard even after that middle period.

Only toward the end of his life did the earth-man become insensible to them. And the memory-pictures of those sounds remained. In them were contained the manifestations of the Sons of Life (Angels). When, toward the end of his life, man felt himself inwardly united with those forces, he was able, by imitating them, to produce mighty effects in the earth's watery element. Under his influence the waters surged up and down within and upon the earth. Man had perceptions of taste only during the first quarter of his earth-life, and even then they seemed to the soul like a memory of the experience of his disembodied state. As long as they lasted, his body continued to grow more and more solid by assimilating external substances. In the second quarter of earthly existence growth certainly continued, but the form was already fully developed. At this time man could perceive other living beings near him only through their heat, light, and sound effects: for he was not as yet capable of imagining

the solid element. During the first quarter of his life he received the taste-impressions that have been described only through the watery element.

Man's external bodily form was a copy of this inner psychic condition. Those parts were most fully developed which contained the first beginnings of the later form of the head. The other organs appeared only as appendages. These were shadowy and indistinct. Yet earth-beings varied with regard to form. There were some in whom the appendages were more or less developed, according to the earth-conditions under which they lived. This varied with people's different dwelling places on the earth. Where they were more involved in the things of earth, the appendages became more prominent. Those human beings who at the beginning of physical development on earth were the ripest, owing to their previous evolution, having come into contact with the fire-element at the very beginning, before the earth had been condensed into air, were those now able to develop most completely the first beginnings of the head. These were the people possessing most inward harmony.

Others were ready for contact with the fire-element only when the earth had already evolved air within itself. These people were more dependent on outer conditions than those first mentioned. These latter distinctly felt the Lords of Form

through heat, and during their earth-life they felt as if they retained a memory of having belonged to those spirits and of having been one with them in the disembodied state. The second kind of people only had the memory of the disembodied state in a more limited degree; they were conscious of their fellowship with the spiritual world chiefly through the light-influences of the Sons of Fire (Archangels). A third variety of human beings was still more entangled in earthly existence. It was they who were not able to come into contact with the fire-element till the earth was separated from the sun, and had absorbed the watery element within itself. Their feeling of fellowship with the spiritual world was especially slight at the beginning of earth-life. Only when the influence of the Archangels, and more especially of the Angels, made itself felt in the inner image-forming life, did they feel this connection in any degree. On the other hand, at the beginning of the earth-period they were full of active impulses toward performing deeds which can be accomplished under earthly conditions proper. In them the supplementary organs were particularly strongly developed.

When the Moon-forces, before the separation of the moon from the earth, were more and more tending to solidify the latter, it happened that among the descendants of the embryos left behind upon the earth by man there were some in whom

human souls returning from the disembodied state could no longer be incarnated in consequence of the Moon-forces. The form of these descendants was too much solidified and, in virtue of the Moon-forces, had become too unlike human form to be able to assume it. Consequently certain human souls no longer found it possible, under these circumstances, to return to earth. Only the ripest and strongest of these souls could feel competent so to transform the earth-body during growth that it could blossom into a human form. Only a proportion of the bodily descendants of man became the vehicles of earthly human beings. Another section was only able, on account of solidified form, to receive souls on a lower level than those of men. But one section of human souls was prevented from taking part in the earth-evolution of that time. In this way they were driven to embark on another course.

There were souls who, as far back as the separation of the sun from the earth, found no place on the latter. For their further evolution they were removed to a planet which, under the guidance of cosmic beings, was being detached from the universal world-substance,—that substance of which the earth formed a part at the beginning of its physical evolution, and from which the sun had separated. This planet is the one known to outer science, in its physical expression, as “Jupiter.” (Here we are speaking of celestial bodies,

planets, and their names exactly in the sense of a more ancient science, and as is in harmony with occult science. Just as the physical earth is only the physical expression of a great spiritual-psychic organism, so is every other celestial body. And as the seer does not denote only the physical planet by the word "earth," nor only the physical fixed star by "sun," so when speaking of "Jupiter," "Mars," and the other planets he signifies far-reaching spiritual connections. The form and mission of the heavenly bodies have, in the course of nature, been essentially changed since the times of which we are here speaking,—in a certain respect even their position in celestial space is changed too. It is possible only for one who follows with the seer's vision the evolution of those celestial bodies back to remote ages of the past, to apprehend the connection of contemporary planets with their predecessors.) On Jupiter the souls that have been described continued their evolution.

And later, when the earth was tending more and more toward consolidation, another abode had to be prepared for souls for whom it was certainly possible to occupy the solidified bodies for a time, but who could not do so when the solidification had progressed too far. An appropriate place for their further evolution was found in Mars. Even as far back as the time when the soul was still united with the sun, and was incorporating

the sun's air elements within itself, souls were proving unfit to participate in the earth's evolution. They were too powerfully affected by the earthly bodily form. Accordingly, even at that time, they had to be withdrawn from the direct influence of the Sun-forces. These had to influence them from without. Saturn became the scene of their further evolution.

Thus, in the course of the earth's evolution, the number of human forms decreased, and forms appeared which had not embodied human souls. These were able to receive only astral bodies within them, as the human physical and etheric bodies on the old Moon had done. While the earth was becoming depopulated as far as human beings were concerned, these other beings were colonizing it. At length all human souls would have been compelled to leave the earth if another possibility had not been provided by the detachment of the moon. The human forms which could still be animated by human souls were enabled to withdraw the budding human life, during earthly existence, from the Moon-forces proceeding directly from the earth, and to let the life mature within themselves up to a point at which it could be delivered over to those forces. As long as the life was developing within man, it was under the influence of the beings who, under the leadership of the mightiest of their number, had detached the moon from the earth in order to conduct

the evolution of the latter over a critical point.

When the earth had developed the air element within it there were present astral beings, as described above, who had been parts of the old Moon and had been left behind. These had fallen short, in their evolution, of the lowest human souls. They became the souls of those forms which, even before the separation of the sun, had to be abandoned by man. These beings were the ancestors of the animal kingdom. In the course of time they specially developed those organs which in man only existed as appendages. Their astral body had to work on the physical and etheric bodies in the same way as did the human astral body during the old Moon-period. Now the animals which had thus come into existence had souls which could not dwell in single animals. The soul's existence was also extended to the descendant of the ancestral form. Virtually, animals descended from one form have a soul in common. Only when the descendant diverges from the ancestral type through special influences, does a new animal soul become incarnated. In this sense, conformably with occult science, we may speak of a species or race-soul, or group-soul, in animals.

Something of a similar nature took place at the time of the separation of sun and earth. There came forth from the watery element forms no further evolved than was man before the old Moon-

evolution. They could receive an impression from anything of an astral nature only when the latter influenced them from without. This could not happen till after the departure of the sun from the earth. Whenever the sun-period of the earth set in, the astral element in the sun stimulated these forms in such a way that they formed their vital body out of the etheric part of the earth. When the sun turned away from the earth, that etheric body was again dissolved into the common earth-life. And as a result of the coöperation of the astral part of the sun with the etheric part of the earth, there emerged from the watery element those physical forms which became the ancestors of the present vegetable kingdom.

Man became an individualized psychic being on earth. His astral body, which had flowed into him on the Moon through the Lords of Motion, became organized on earth into the sentient, intellectual and self-conscious souls. And when the self-conscious soul had progressed so far that it was able to form for itself during earth-life a body adapted to that life, the Lords of Form endowed that body with a spark from their fire. The "ego" was kindled within it. Every time man now left the physical body he was in the spiritual world, in which he met the beings who, during the Saturn, Sun, and Moon evolutions, had given him his physical, etheric, and astral

bodies, and developed him as far as the earth-stage. Since the spark of the ego had been kindled during earth-life, there had also come about a change in the disembodied life. Up to this point of evolution, man had had no independence within the spiritual world. Within that world he did not feel himself a separate being, but as though he were a member of the exalted organism which was composed of the beings superior to him. The "ego experience" on earth now takes effect also in the spiritual world. Henceforth man feels himself to be, to a certain degree, a unit in that world. But he feels also that he is unceasingly linked with it. In the disembodied state he again finds the Lords of Form, in a higher aspect, and this aspect he had perceived in their manifestation on earth by means of the spark of his ego.

At the separation of the moon from the earth the disembodied soul began to have experiences in the spiritual world which were connected with that separation. Indeed, it only became possible to continue developing on the earth such human forms as could receive psychic individuality, through the transfer of part of the shaping forces from the earth to the moon. By this means human individuality came into the sphere of the Moon-beings. And in the disembodied state the memory of earthly individuality could only operate because, even in that state, the soul remained

within the sphere of those mighty spirits who had brought about the separation of the moon. The process worked thus,—that immediately after leaving the earth-body the soul could only see the exalted Sun-beings as though in a lustre reflected from the Moon-beings. And it was only when sufficiently prepared by gazing at that reflected splendour that the soul attained to the vision of the exalted Sun-beings themselves.

The mineral kingdom of the earth also arose out of what was ejected from human evolution in general. Its structures are what was consolidated when the moon was detached from the earth. The only soul-element which felt attracted to those structures was that which had been left behind at the Saturn stage, and was therefore only adapted for developing physical forms. All the occurrences treated of here and in what follows were enacted in the course of exceedingly long periods. But the question of chronology cannot be entered into here.

The events described exhibit the evolution of the earth from without. Seen spiritually from within, the facts present themselves as follows. The spiritual beings who drew the moon out of the earth and incorporated their own existence with the moon, thus becoming beings of the earth-moon, brought about a certain formation of the human organism by means of the forces which they sent to the earth from the moon. Their

influence affected the ego which man had acquired, and made itself felt in the interplay of that ego with the astral, etheric, and physical bodies. Through their influence it became possible for man consciously to reflect within himself the consummate wisdom of the formation of the world, to reproduce it mirrored in knowledge. It will be remembered that during the old Moon-period man, owing to the separation from the sun at that time, acquired a certain independence in his organism, a more unfettered stage of consciousness than that which he had been able to derive directly from the Sun-spirits. This free, independent consciousness appeared again—a heritage from the old Moon-evolution—during the earth-period in question. But it was just this consciousness which, through the influence of the beings of the earth-moon described, could again be brought into union and harmony with the universe, and be made a reflection of it. This would have happened if no other influence had asserted itself. Failing any other influence, man would have become a being with a consciousness of which the content would have been a reproduction of the world in pictures of perception; and this not through its own initiative, but as by natural necessity.

Things did not happen thus. At the time when the moon split off, there interposed in human evolution certain spiritual beings who had retained

so much of *their* Moon nature that they could not take part in the exodus of the sun from the earth, and were shut out from the influence of the spirits who from the earth-moon had exerted their activity upon the earth. These spirits with the old Moon nature were, so to say, banished to the earth, but with an irregular development. In their Moon nature was that which had rebelled against the Sun-spirits during the old Moon-evolution, and which had so far been a blessing to man that it had led him to a free, independent state of consciousness. The consequences of the peculiar development of these spirits during the earth-period entailed their becoming adversaries of the spirits who, acting from the moon, desired to make human consciousness an automatic reflector of the universe. What had helped man to a higher state of development on the old Moon proved to be in opposition to the possibilities which had arisen through the evolution of the earth. The opposing forces had brought with them from their Moon nature the power of working upon the human astral body, that is to say,—in accordance with the above statements,—the power of making it independent. They exercised that power by giving the astral body a certain degree of independence—in this case for the earth-period—as compared with the automatic (involuntary) state of consciousness which had been brought about by the spirits of the earth-moon.

It is difficult to express in the language of to-day the effects on man in that far-off time of the spiritual beings referred to. They must not be thought of as analogous to nature influences of the present time, nor yet as similar to the influence of one human being on another, when the first awakens in the second inner powers of consciousness by words which help the second person to understand something, or stimulate him to virtue or vice. The effect referred to as operative in that primeval age was not a natural force but a spiritual influence, conveyed in a spiritual way, and which descended upon man as a spiritual influx from the higher spirits, conformably with man's state of consciousness at that time. If we think of the influence as a nature-force we altogether miss its essential reality. If we say that the spirits with the old Moon nature tempted man in order to lead him astray for their own ends, we are using a symbolical expression, which is good as long as we remember it is but a symbol and are at the same time clear in our minds that a spiritual fact underlies the symbol.

The influence brought to bear on man by the spirits who had remained behind during the Moon-evolution had a twofold result. Man's consciousness was divested of the character of being merely a mirror of the universe, because the possibility was aroused in the human astral body of regulating and controlling from this astral

body the images in the consciousness. Man became the ruler of his own knowledge. But on the other hand it was the astral body that was the startingpoint of that rulership, and consequently the ego set over the astral body came to be continually dependent upon it. Hence man was from this time forth exposed to the lasting influences of a lower element in his nature. It was possible for him in his life to sink below the height on which he had been placed by the spirits of the earth-moon in the course of the world's progress. And subsequently he was open to the lasting influence on his nature of the irregularly evolved Moon-spirits. We may call these the Luciferian spirits, as distinguished from the other spirits who, from the earth-moon, made the consciousness into a mirror of the universe, without bestowing any free will. The Luciferian spirits endowed man with the possibility of developing free activity in his consciousness, and at the same time created the possibility of error and evil.

The result of these events was that man was brought into a different connection with the Sun-spirits from that which had been destined for him by the spirits of the earth-moon. These had wished so to develop the mirror of his consciousness that the influence of the Sun-spirits should have been the prevailing one within the whole inner life of man. These purposes were crossed, and there was created in human nature an opposition

between the influence of the Sun-spirits and that of the spirits irregularly evolved on the old Moon. Owing to this opposition there also arose in man the incapacity for recognizing the physical Sun-influences as such; they were hidden by the earthly impressions of the outer world. Filled with these impressions, the astral part of man was drawn into the sphere of the ego. This ego, which otherwise would have felt only the spark of fire bestowed on it by the Lords of Form, and would have submitted to the bidding of those spirits in everything which had to do with external fire, henceforth worked upon external heat phenomena through the element with which it had itself been inoculated. A bond of attraction was thereby established between the ego and the earth-fire.

In this way man became more involved in earthly materiality than had been ordained for him. Whereas he previously had a physical body consisting mainly of fire, air, and water, with only a slight admixture of the earth substance, the body now became more solid and dense. And whereas man previously had been moving in a floating, hovering manner over the solid earth, as a finely organized being, he was now forced to descend "from the earth's periphery" to parts of it which were already more or less consolidated.

That such physical effects of the 'spiritual influences above described could be produced

is accounted for by the fact that the influences were of the kind that has been depicted, neither nature forces nor such as act from the soul of one human being on another. The influence of the latter does not extend so far into matter as the spiritual forces which are here in question.

Because man laid himself open to the influences of the outer world, through following his own ideas which were liable to error; because he lived to gratify desires and passions which he did not allow higher spiritual influences to regulate, the possibility of disease appeared. But a special effect of the Lucifer influence was that henceforth man could not feel his individual earth-life to be a continuation of the disembodied state. Henceforth he was open to such earth-impressions as arose through the astral element with which he had been inoculated, and these combined with the forces destructive of the physical body. Man felt this as the decay of his earth-life. And in this manner "death" came about, caused by human nature itself. This points to a significant mystery in man's nature, the connection of the human astral body with disease and death.

Particular conditions now set in, affecting the human etheric body. It was put into a position between the physical and astral bodies, which, to a certain extent, caused its withdrawal from the faculties acquired by man through the Lucifer influence. Part of the etheric body was left so

much outside the physical body that it could be ruled only by higher beings, not by the human ego. The higher beings were those who had left the earth at the separation of the sun, in order to occupy another dwelling place under the guidance of one of their exalted associates. If that part of the etheric body that has been described had remained linked with the astral body, man would have had at his disposal supersensible forces formerly possessed by him. He would have directed the Lucifer influence on to those forces, and would by degrees have quite freed himself from the Sun-beings. His ego would have become entirely an earth-ego. It must in that case have come about that that earth-ego, after the death of the physical body (in some cases even during its decay), would have occupied another physical body, that of a descendant, without passing through the stage of union with higher spiritual bodies in a disembodied state. Man would thus have arrived at the consciousness of his own ego, but only of an earthly one. This was averted by the process which was effected through the earth-moon spirits. The real individual ego was thereby so set free from the mere earth-ego that though man during earth-life only partially felt himself to be an ego, he at the same time felt his earth-ego to be a continuation of that of his ancestors through the generations. The soul was conscious of a kind of "group-ego" in earth-life,

dating back to remote ancestors; man felt himself to be a member of this group. Only in the disembodied state could the individual ego be copscious of itself as a separate being. But this state of isolation was impaired because the ego was still burdened with a memory of the earth-consciousness (earth-ego). This memory troubled its vision of the spiritual world, which began to be covered with a veil between birth and death, in the same way in which physical eyes on earth may be veiled.

The many changes which took place in the spiritual world while human evolution was passing through the conditions just described, found physical expression in the gradual adjustment of the mutual relations existing between the sun, moon, and earth (and, moreover, between other celestial bodies).

The alternation of day and night stands out as *one* result of those relations. (The motions of the celestial bodies are regulated by the beings who inhabit them. The earth's motion, of which day and night are the result, was induced by the mutual relations of the various spirits superior to man. The moon's motion had been brought about in the same way, in order that after the separation of the moon from the earth the Lords of Form might, by means of the revolution of the former around the latter, work upon the human physical body in the right way, and with the right

rhythm.) The ego and the astral body of man now worked within the physical and etheric bodies by day; at night that activity ceased: for the ego and the astral body then left the physical and etheric bodies, and came wholly within the sphere of the Sons of Life, or Angels, the Sons of Fire, or Archangels, the Sons of Personality, and the Lords of Form. Besides the Lords of Form, the Lords of Motion, of Wisdom, and the Thrones also included the physical and etheric bodies in their sphere of influence at this time. The injurious effects produced on man by the errors of his astral body during the day, could thus be counter-balanced.

Now that mankind was once more on the increase on earth, there was no longer any reason against the incarnation of human souls in their descendants. As the Moon-forces were then at work, there were formed under their influence human bodies thoroughly adapted for occupation by human souls. The souls previously removed to Mars, Jupiter, and the other planets were now guided to earth, and there was thus a soul ready for each human being born in the physical line of descent. This went on through long periods until the immigration of souls to earth corresponded to the increase of human beings. The souls now leaving their bodies at physical death retained the echo of their earthly individuality as a memory in the disembodied state. The

result of that memory was that when a body suitable for them was again born on earth, those souls were once more incarnated in it. In the course of time there were in the human race some whose souls came from without and were appearing on earth for the first time since its very earliest periods, and others with souls which had already been incarnated on the earth in its present form. In subsequent periods of earthly evolution the number of young souls appearing for the first time grows ever smaller and smaller, and the reincarnated souls become more and more numerous; yet for long ages the human race was composed of the two varieties of people conditioned by these facts.

Henceforth man on earth felt himself united with his forefathers through the group-ego which he had in common with them. On the other hand, the experience of the individual ego was all the stronger in the disembodied state between death and a new birth. The souls which entered human bodies from celestial space were in a different position from those which had one or more earthly lives behind them. The former, as souls entering upon the physical earth-life, brought with them only the conditions to which the higher spiritual world and their experiences outside the sphere of earth subjected them. The others had, by their actions in former lives, added conditions of their own. The fate of the first was determined

only by facts lying beyond the new earth-conditions; that of the reincarnate souls is also determined by what they have themselves done in former lives under earthly conditions. Individual human Karma makes its first appearance simultaneously with reincarnation.

Because the human etheric body was withdrawn from the astral body in the manner above indicated, the generative faculty also was not included in the sphere of human consciousness, but was under the sway of the spiritual world. When the time had come for a soul to descend to earth, procreative impulses arose in a human being. The entire process, up to a certain point, was veiled in mysterious obscurity as far as earthly consciousness was concerned. But the consequences of this partial separation of the etheric from the physical body were felt during earthly life also. The qualities of the etheric body were capable of being specially ennobled by spiritual influence. In psychic life this made itself felt by the memory's being brought to a special degree of perfection. Independent logical thought was at this period only in its most rudimentary stage in man; on the other hand, the faculty of memory was almost unlimited. Externally it appeared as if man had direct knowledge of the working forces of every living being. He had at his disposal the vital and generative forces of animal and, more especially, of vegetable nature.

He was able, for instance, to draw out of a plant the force which impels it to grow, and to use that force, just as we use the forces of inanimate nature; for example, that dormant in coal is extricated and used for propelling engines.¹

The inner psychic life of man was also transformed in many different ways by the Lucifer influence. Many kinds of feelings and emotions due to it might be instanced. Of these only one can be mentioned. Previously to this influence the human soul, in what it shaped and performed, had worked under the will and purposes of higher spiritual beings. The plan of everything that was to be carried out was determined on beforehand. And in proportion to the degree to which human consciousness was evolved, was it able to foresee how things must develop in the future in accordance with that preconceived plan. That consciousness of the future was lost when the veil of earthly perceptions was woven across the manifestations of higher spiritual beings and in these the real forces of the Sun-spirits were hidden. Henceforth the future became uncertain, and in consequence of this the possibility of fear was implanted in the soul. Fear is a direct result of error.

It is however evident that through the Lucifer influence man became independent of certain

¹ Further particulars on this subject will be found in my book, *Atlantis and Lemuria*, which deals with man's ancestors,

definite forces to which he had previously submitted without the exercise of his will. Henceforward he was able to form resolutions of his own. Freedom is the result of the Lucifer influence, and fear and similar feelings are only the phenomena attendant on the evolution of human freedom.

Spiritually seen, fear makes its appearance in this way. Within the earth-forces under the influence of which man had come by means of the Luciferian powers, other powers were operating, which had developed irregularly much earlier in the course of evolution than the Luciferian powers. With the earth-forces man admitted into his nature the influence of these other powers. They gave to feelings, which without them would have operated quite differently, the quality of fear. They may be called Ahrimanic beings. They are the same as those which Goethe calls Mephistophelian.

Although the Lucifer influence had at first made itself felt only in the most advanced individuals, it soon became extended to others. The descendants of the advanced individuals were interbred with the less progressive described above, and in this way the Lucifer force was conveyed to the latter. But the etheric body of the souls returning from the plants could not be protected to the same extent as the one possessed by the descendants of those who had

remained on earth. The protection of this body emanated from an exalted being who had the direction of the cosmos at the separation of the sun from the earth. That being is the ruler of the sun kingdom. With him there removed to the dwelling place in the sun those lofty spirits whose cosmic development had sufficiently matured them. But there were other beings who had not reached such a height at the separation of the sun: these were obliged to seek other spheres. It was through their instrumentality that Jupiter and other planets became detached from that general cosmic substance which at the outset was in the earthly physical organism. Jupiter now became the abode of those beings who were not highly developed enough to live on the sun, and the most advanced of these became the leader on Jupiter. The leader of the Sun-evolution became the "higher ego" which worked in the etheric body of the descendants of those who had remained on earth.

In a similar way the leader on Jupiter became the "higher ego" passing as a common consciousness through the posterity which resulted from the crossing of the offspring of those who had remained on earth with those who had appeared on earth for the first time during the period of the air element, as described above, and had passed over to Jupiter. This mixed race may be called, in conformity with occult

science, "Jupiter-humanity." They were scions of the human race who had adopted human souls far back in that ancient time; but who, at the beginning of earthly evolution, were not yet mature enough to take part in the first contact with fire. They were souls midway between the human and animal soul-kingdoms.

Now there were other beings who, under the leadership of one of the highest, had detached Mars from the general cosmic substance, that it might be their dwelling place. Under their influence there arose a third kind of humanity, formed by interbreeding, the "Mars-humanity." (By means of this knowledge, light is thrown on the origin of the formation of the planets of our solar system; for all the members of that system originated through the various stages of maturity reached by the beings inhabiting them. But it is of course not possible to enter into all the details of cosmic formation here.) Those people who felt in their etheric body the influence of the exalted Sun-being himself, may be called "Sun-humanity." The being who lived in them as the higher ego—of course only in the race, not in the individual,—is the same to whom various names were given in later times, when man had gained conscious knowledge of him, and who appears to the human race to-day as the Christ.

"Saturn-humanity" is also to be distinguished at that time. The "higher ego" of this race

appeared as a being who with his associates had been forced to leave the general cosmic substance before the separation of the sun. Part of the physical, no less than of the etheric body of these people, was exempt from the Lucifer influence. But the etheric body was nevertheless not sufficiently protected in the lowlier races of mankind to be able to resist the influences of the Lucifer nature. These people could extend the free action of the spark of the ego within them so far as to call forth potent and mischievous effects of fire around them. The result was a mighty terrestrial catastrophe. A large part of the then inhabited earth was wrecked by fiery storms, and with it the human beings that had fallen into error. Only a very small proportion, some of whom had remained untouched by error, were able to take refuge in a region which had so far been shielded from the fatal human influence.

The country occupying that part of the earth now covered by the Atlantic Ocean proved to be peculiarly well fitted for the abode of the new human race. Thither did those people repair who had remained most free from error. Only those cut off from the main body of humanity inhabited other regions. Occult science gives the name of "Atlantis" to that part of the earth which once existed between the present continents of Europe, Africa, and America. (This particular stage of human evolution has its special nomenclature

in theosophical literature. The period 'preceding the Atlantean is called the Lemurian age, whereas that during which the Moon-forces had not yet fully developed is called the Hyperborean age. This is preceded by yet another, which coincides with the earliest period of the evolution of the physical earth. Biblical tradition describes the period before the influence of Lucifer-beings came into play as the Paradise time, and the descent to earth, or entanglement of humanity in the sense-world, as the expulsion from Paradise.)

The Atlantean period of evolution was the real time of separation into Saturn, Sun, Jupiter, and Mars humanity. Up to that time only predispositions in those directions had been developed. The division of the waking state from sleep had special consequences, which appeared particularly in the Atlantean race. During the night the human astral body and ego were in the sphere of the beings superior to man, as far up as the Sons of Personality. Man could feel the influence of the Sons of Life and the Sons of Fire through that part of his etheric body which was not united with the physical body. For he was able to remain united, during sleep, with that part of his etheric body which was not interpenetrated by the physical body. It is true his perception of the Sons of Personality was vague, owing to the Lucifer influence; but there became 'visible to man, in this condition, not only the Angels and

Archangels but also those beings who were not able to enter upon earthly existence because they had lagged behind on the Sun or Moon, and were therefore obliged to remain in the psycho-spiritual world. But man, by means of the Lucifer influence, drew them into that part of his soul which was separated from his physical body. Hence he came into contact with beings who led him very far astray. They increased, in his soul, the propensity to error; especially the misuse of the powers of growth and reproduction, which since the separation of the physical and etheric bodies were now under his control.

It was now made possible for certain individuals of the Atlantean period to become very little entangled in the sense-world. Through them, the Lucifer influence was turned from being a hindrance to human evolution into a means of further progress. It enabled them to develop knowledge of earthly matters sooner than would otherwise have been possible. They sought to expel error from their imaginative life, and to interpret from cosmic phenomena the original purposes of spiritual beings. They kept themselves free from those impulses and desires of the astral body which were directed merely toward the sense-world. Hence they became more and more free from the errors of the astral body. This induced in them conditions through which they were able to confine their perceptions to

that part of the etheric body which was separated from the astral body in the manner described above. Under these conditions the capacity of the physical body for perception was practically annihilated, and the physical body itself was as if dead. For through the etheric body, these people were wholly united with the kingdom of the Lords of Form, and were able to learn from them how they were being guided and directed by that exalted being who was the leader at the separation of sun and earth,—by the “Christ.” These people were Initiates. But since human individuality had been brought into the sphere of the Moon-beings, as described above, these Initiates could not as a rule come into direct contact with the Christ; they could only be shown him reflected, as it were, by the Moon-beings.

In this case they did not see the Christ directly, but only his reflected glory. They became leaders of the rest of humanity, to whom they were able to impart the mysteries they had seen. They attracted disciples, to whom they communicated the methods for attaining the condition which leads to Initiation. Only those could attain knowledge of the Christ who were members of the Sun-humanity mentioned above. They cultivated their mystic learning, and the occupations which promoted it, at a particular spot which, in conformity with occult science, may be called the Christ oracle, or Sun oracle, the term “oracle”

being used to denote a place where the purposes of spiritual beings are unveiled.

Other oracles were called into being by the members of the Saturn, Mars, and Jupiter humanity. The intuitive vision of their Initiates was confined to seeing those beings who were revealed to them in their etheric bodies as their respective "higher egos." Thus there arose adherents of the Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars wisdom. Besides these methods of Initiation, there were others for people who had assimilated too much of the Lucifer spirit to allow as large a part of the etheric body to be separated from the physical body as was the case with the Sun-humanity. The astral body of these people kept back even more of the etheric within the physical body than did the Sun-humanity. Nor could they be brought to the revelation of the Christ through the conditions mentioned above. Because their astral body was more influenced by the Lucifer principle, they were obliged to undergo a more difficult preparation, and then, in a less disembodied state than the others, they were able to receive the revelation, not indeed of the Christ himself, but of other exalted beings.

There were beings who, although they had left the earth at the separation of the sun, did not stand on such a high level that they were able to continue taking part in the Sun evolution. They formed an abode for themselves away from the

sun, after its separation from the earth: this was Venus. Their leader was the being who now became the "higher ego" of these Initiates and their adherents. A similar thing happened with the leading spirit of Mercury for another variety of people. In this way there arose the Venus and Mercury oracles. One kind of human beings, who had most absorbed the Lucifer influence, could reach only one of the higher beings who, with his associates, had been expelled earliest of all from the Sun evolution. This being owns no particular planet in space, but still lives within the periphery of the earth, with which he was once more united after the return from the sun. The people to whom this being was revealed as their higher ego may be called the followers of the Vulcan oracle. Their attention was more directed to earthly phenomena than that of the other Initiates. They laid the first foundations of what afterwards became the human arts and sciences. On the other hand, the Mercury Initiates established the study of the more super-sensible things; and the Venus Initiates did this to a still greater extent.

The Vulcan, Mercury, and Venus Initiates differed from those of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars in that the latter received their Mysteries more as a revelation from above, and in a more complete state; whereas the former gained their knowledge more in the form of their own thoughts,—in the

form of ideas. The Christ Initiates occupied a middle position. Together with the direct revelation, they received the capacity for clothing their Mysteries in a human form of conception. The Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars Initiates were obliged to express themselves more in sense-images; the Christ, Venus, Mercury, and Vulcan Initiates were able to impart their knowledge more through ideas pure and simple.

Whatever knowledge of this kind reached Atlantean humanity came indirectly through the Initiates. But the rest of mankind also received special faculties through the Lucifer principle; for, through the agency of lofty cosmic beings, what would have wrought ruin was turned to a good end. One of these faculties was that of speech. This was bestowed upon man through his being materialized into physical substance and through the separation of part of his etheric from his physical body. In the times after the moon had split off, man at first felt himself connected with his physical ancestors through the group-ego. But this common consciousness, linking posterity with its ancestors, was gradually lost in the course of generations. Later descendants had an inner memory of only their more recent ancestors, no longer of their earlier forefathers. It was only in the conditions akin to sleep, during which mankind came into contact with the spiritual world, that the remembrance

of one ancestor or another again emerged. Then people felt themselves one with that ancestor whom they believed to be reappearing in them. This was an erroneous idea of reincarnation, which arose especially in the later Atlantean period. The true doctrine of reincarnation could be learned only in the schools of the Initiates. They could see how the human soul passes through the disembodied state on its way from one incarnation to another, and they alone were able to impart the real truth of the matter to their disciples.

In the remote past which is now under consideration, man's physical form was very different from his present form. It was still, to a great extent, the expression of the qualities of his soul. Man was composed of a softer and more delicate substance than that which he has since acquired. That which is now solidified was then in the limbs soft, flexible, and plastic. The bodily structure of the more psychic and spiritual human beings was delicate, supple, and expressive. Those less evolved spiritually possessed coarser, heavier, less mobile bodily forms. A high degree of psychic maturity contracted the limbs, and the form was kept small; backwardness of the soul and entanglement in sensuality were outwardly expressed in gigantic size. While man was growing to maturity his body was being formed, in accordance with what was growing in his soul, in a way which would appear incredible and fantastic

to contemporary ideas. Depraved passions, impulses, and instincts brought in their train a colossal increase of matter. Man's present physical form has come about through a contraction, thickening, and consolidation of the Atlantean human form. And whereas man, before the Atlantean period, had been a faithful image of his soul's being, the events of Atlantean evolution bore within them the causes conducing to the structure of post-Atlantean man, whose physical form is solid and comparatively independent of the qualities of the soul. (The forms of the animal kingdom became dense on earth long before man.) The laws now governing the shaping of forms in the kingdom of nature must certainly not be thought of as prevailing in the remote past.

Toward the middle of the Atlantean evolution evil gradually made itself felt in humanity. The Mysteries of the Initiates had to be carefully kept secret from those who had not purified their astral bodies from error. Had these gained insight into that hidden knowledge, into the laws by means of which higher beings directed the forces of nature, they would have placed those forces at the disposal of their own perverted needs and passions. The danger was all the greater because mankind was coming, as has been described, into the sphere of lower spiritual beings, who could not take part in the regular evolution of the earth and were therefore working against it. These persistently

influenced humanity in such a way as to instil into it interests which were actually directed against human welfare. But mankind still had at its disposal the forces of growth and reproduction belonging to animal and human nature.

Not only ordinary people, but also some of the Initiates, were subject to temptation on the part of lower spiritual beings. They were induced to employ the supersensible forces mentioned above for a purpose which ran counter to human evolution. And for this purpose they sought out associates who were not initiated, and who made use of the secrets of the supersensible forces of nature for low ends. The result was a great corruption of human nature. The evil spread further and further; and since the forces of growth and generation, if torn from their original sphere and used independently, have a mysterious connection with certain forces working in air and water, there were thus unchained, through human action, mighty, destructive natural forces which led to the gradual ruin of the Atlantean territory by the agency of air and water catastrophes. Atlantean humanity was obliged to wander forth—that portion of it, at least, which did not perish in the storms.

In consequence of these storms the earth took on a new aspect. On one side, Europe, Asia, and Africa gradually assumed their present shape; on the other, America appeared. Great companies

of wanderers set out for these countries. Those who journeyed eastward from Atlantis are especially important for us of to-day. Europe, Asia, and Africa were gradually colonized by the descendants of the Atlanteans. Various races fixed their abode in these continents. They were at different stages of development, and also at different levels of corruption. And with them came the Initiates, guardians of the oracle-Mysteries. They established sanctuaries in various parts, in which the cults of Jupiter, Venus, etc., were carried on, sometimes in a good, sometimes in a bad spirit. The betrayal of the Vulcan Mysteries exercised a specially unfavourable influence, for the attention of their adherents was more directed to earthly matters than was that of the others. By this betrayal, mankind was made dependent on spiritual beings who, as a result of their past evolution, rejected everything emanating from the spiritual world which had been evolved through the separation of the earth from the sun. In accordance with the tendency they had thus developed, they worked upon just that element in man which was formed through his having perceptions of the sense-world, behind which the spiritual world lies hidden. Thenceforward these beings acquired great influence over many of the human inhabitants of earth, and their influence first asserted itself by depriving mankind more and more of the feeling for spiritual things.

Since the size, form, and flexibility of the physical human body were still largely affected by the qualities of the soul, the consequence of the betrayal of the Mysteries also appeared in changes of the human race in these respects. When human corruption expressed itself in the fact that supersensible powers were made subservient to lower impulses, desires, and passions, misshapen human forms, grotesque in size and shape, were the result. These were not able to survive the Atlantean period, and became extinct. Post-Atlantean humanity was formed physically from those Atlantean ancestors in whom such a solidification of the bodily form had taken place that it no longer yielded to the powers of the soul, which thenceforth became abnormal.

There was a certain period in Atlantean evolution during which, by means of the laws prevailing on and around the earth, just those conditions obtained which tended to consolidate man's bodily form. The human race-types which had been solidified before this period were certainly able to reproduce themselves for a long time, but the souls incarnating in them were gradually so cramped that the forms were bound to become extinct. It is true that many of these race-types survived to post-Atlantean times; those which had remained sufficiently plastic lasted even for a very long time. The human forms which had remained flexible after the period described became

bodies for such souls as had largely undergone the pernicious influence of the betrayal described above. These forms were destined to speedy extinction.

In consequence of what had happened in this way, beings had made themselves felt in the sphere of human evolution, since the middle of the Atlantean period, whose influence tended to make mankind live in the physical world of sense in an unspiritual manner. This went so far that, instead of man's seeing the real form of that world, phantoms, hallucinations, and illusions of every kind appeared to him. Mankind was exposed not merely to the Lucifer influence but to that of those other beings mentioned above, whose leader may be called Ahriman, according to the appellation given him later in the Persian civilization. (He is the same as Mephistopheles.) Through this influence man was subject, after death, to powers which made him appear even then as a being belonging only to earthly conditions of the senses. Open vision of the events of the spiritual world was more and more taken from him. He was forced to feel himself in Ahriman's power, and to a certain extent shut out from intercourse with the spiritual world.

There was one oracle-sanctuary of special importance, which in the universal decline had preserved the ancient cult in its purest form. It was one of the Christ oracles, and on that account

it was able to preserve not only the Christ Mystery itself but those of the other oracles. For in the manifestation of the loftiest of the Sun-spirits, there were also revealed the leaders of Saturn, Jupiter, and the other planets. In the Sun oracle there was known the secret of calling forth, in one or another human being, such human etheric bodies as had been owned by the best of the Jupiter, Mercury, and other Initiates. By means of the methods used for this purpose, which cannot be further dealt with here, the impressions of the best etheric bodies of the ancient Initiates were preserved, in order that they might subsequently be stamped upon suitable individuals. The like could be done with the astral bodies of the Venus, Mercury, and Vulcan Initiates.

At a certain point of time the leader of the Christ Initiates found himself isolated with a few associates, to whom he was able to impart, to a very limited extent only, the mysteries of the cosmos. For those associates were people who had received as a natural gift the least possible degree of separation between the physical and etheric bodies. They were altogether, at that time, the best possible people for promoting the further progress of humanity. Their experiences in the realm of sleep had become rarer and rarer. The spiritual world was more and more closed to them. But they were also lacking in the comprehension of all that had been revealed to man in ancient

times when he was not in his physical, but only in his etheric body. The people immediately surrounding the leader of the Christ oracle were the farthest advanced with regard to the union of the physical body with that part of the etheric body which had previously been separated from it. This union came about in human nature by little and little, as a result of the transformation which had taken place with regard to Atlantean territory and the earth generally.

The physical and etheric bodies of man were being more and more covered up. Hence the memory lost its former unlimited capacity, and the human life of thought began. That part of the etheric which was united with the physical body transformed the physical brain into an actual instrument of thought, and man from this time first really felt his "ego" within his physical body. Self-consciousness awoke. This was at first the case with only a limited number of the human race, eminently with the associates of the leader of the Christ oracle. The bulk of humanity, scattered over Europe, Asia, and Africa, retained in varying degrees the remains of the old condition of consciousness. Hence they had direct experience of the supersensible world.

The associates of the Christ Initiate were people of highly developed intelligence but of less experience in supersensible spheres than any of their contemporaries. The Initiate journeyed with

them to a country in central Asia. He wished them to be guarded as much as possible from contact with those of less developed consciousness. He educated these associates of his in the spirit of the Mysteries unfolded to him, and specially influenced their descendants in this way. Thus he gathered round him a band of people who had received into their hearts the impulses corresponding to the Mysteries of the Christ Initiation. Out of this company he chose the seven best, that they might be endowed with the etheric and astral bodies which bore the impress of the etheric bodies of the seven best Atlantean Initiates. Thus he educated a successor to each of the Christ, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Vulcan, Mercury, and Venus Initiates. These seven Initiates became the teachers and leaders of the people who, in the post-Atlantean period, had colonized the south of Asia, especially ancient India. Since these great teachers were really endowed with the etheric bodies of their spiritual ancestors, what was in their astral body, that is, the science and knowledge they had themselves worked out, was not enough for what was revealed to them through their etheric body. Therefore when these revelations were about to be uttered within them, they were obliged to impose silence on their own science and knowledge. Then the exalted beings who had also spoken to their spiritual ancestors spoke out of and through them. Except

during the times when these beings were speaking through them, they were simple people, endowed with the measure of intelligence and feeling which they had cultivated and worked out for themselves.

There lived at this time in India a race of people who had retained a specially vivid remembrance of the ancient soul-condition of the Atlanteans, which allowed of experiences in the spiritual world. Moreover, the heart and soul of a great number of these people were powerfully attracted by such experiences. By a wise decree of fate, the majority of the race had come to southern Asia from among the best portions of the Atlantean population. Besides this majority, other Atlanteans had migrated thither at different times. The Christ Initiate, referred to above, appointed his seven great disciples to be the teachers of this association of people, to whom they imparted their wisdom and precepts. Many of these ancient Indians needed but little preparation for reviving within them the scarcely extinct faculties leading to observation of the supersensible world. For longing after that world was really a fundamental quality of the Indian soul. It was felt that man's original home was in that world. Out of it he is transplanted into this one, which offers only outer sense-observation and the intelligence connected with it.

The supersensible world was felt to be the *real* world, and the sense-world to be a deception

of the human power of observation, and illusion (Maya). By every possible means did these people strive to open up a view of the real world. They could take no interest in the illusory sense-world, or at any rate only so far as it proved to be a veil for the supersensible. The power going out from the seven great teachers to such people as these, was a mighty one. What they were able to reveal entered deeply into the Indian soul; and since the possession of the transmitted etheric and astral bodies invested the teachers with lofty powers, they were also able to work magically on their disciples. They did not really teach; they worked as though by magical power from one personality to another. Thus there arose a civilization completely saturated with supersensible wisdom. The contents of the wisdom books of the Hindus, the Vedas, do not give the original form of the lofty wisdom imparted by the great teachers in the most ancient times, but only a feeble echo of it. Only the seer's eye, looking back, is able to find an unwritten original wisdom behind the written words.

A specially prominent feature of this ancient wisdom is the harmonious accord of the various wisdom oracles of the Atlantean time. For each of the great teachers was able to unveil the wisdom of one of these oracles, and these different aspects of wisdom were in complete harmony, because the fundamental wisdom of the Christ Initiation

underlay them. It is true the teacher who was the successor of the Christ Initiate did not impart to his disciples what the Christ Initiate himself was able to reveal. The latter had remained in the background during this period of evolution. At first he was unable to entrust his high office to any post-Atlantean. The difference between him and the Christ Initiate of the seven great Indian teachers was that the former was able to work his vision of the Christ Mystery completely into the form of human ideas, whereas the Indian Christ Initiate could only offer a reflection of the Mystery in signs and symbols; for his humanly cultivated power of conception did not suffice for such a Mystery. However, from the union of the seven teachers there resulted a knowledge of the super-sensible world, presented in one great wisdom-panorama, of which only separate portions could be imparted in the ancient Atlantean oracles. The great leaders of the cosmic world were revealed, and there was just indicated the One great Sun-spirit, the Hidden One, ruling over those who were manifested through the seven teachers.

What is here meant by "ancient Indians" is not the same as what is usually understood by that term. No outer documents exist of the period in question. The people usually known as "Indians" belong to a stage of historical evolution which was developed long after the time spoken of

here. We have to distinguish a first post-Atlantean period of the earth, in which the Indian civilization now described was the predominant one; then came a second post-Atlantean period in which the prevailing civilization was that which later in this work is called the "ancient Persian," and still later there was developed the Egypto-Chaldean civilization, also to be described. During the evolution of these second and third post-Atlantean epochs, "ancient" India also went through a second and third epoch, and to this third epoch belongs what is usually related of ancient India. What is described here must therefore not be applied to the "ancient India" mentioned elsewhere.

Another feature of this ancient Indian civilization is that which afterward led to the division of the race into castes. The inhabitants of India were descendants of Atlanteans who belonged to the various types of Saturn-humanity, Jupiter-humanity, etc. By means of supersensible teachings it was seen that it is not by chance that a soul is incarnated in a particular caste, but that the soul itself has determined its lot. Such an understanding of supersensible teachings was made much easier, because it was possible to revive in many people the inner remembrance of their ancestors which has been described above: this, of course, might also easily lead to an erroneous idea of reincarnation. Just as, in the Atlantean

age, it was only through the Initiates that the true idea of reincarnation could be realized, so in India, in the most ancient times, it was possible only through direct contact with the great teachers. It is true that the erroneous idea of reincarnation mentioned above found the widest acceptance imaginable among the bands of people who were dispersed over Europe, Asia, and Africa in consequence of the Atlantean catastrophe. And because the Initiates who had gone astray during the Atlantean evolution had imparted the mystery of reincarnation to immature souls, mankind began to confuse more and more the true and the erroneous ideas. Many of these people indeed retained a kind of dim clairvoyance, as a heritage from the Atlantean period. Just as the Atlanteans had entered the spiritual world during sleep, their descendants had experience of it in abnormal states, intermediate between sleeping and waking. Then there came uppermost in these people the images of the ancient times of their forefathers. They believed themselves to be reincarnations of people who had lived in those times. Teachings about reincarnation, which were at variance with the true ideas of the Initiates, were widely spread over the earth.

As a result of the long-continued migrations which had set in from west to east since the beginning of the Atlantean catastrophe, there had settled in western Asia an association of people

whose posterity is known to history as the Persian nation and the tribes related to it. Here we are going back to a much earlier period than the historical times of these nations. We have first to deal with very early ancestors of the later Persians, among whom arose the second great civilization of post-Atlantean evolution, that next after the Indian period. The peoples of this second era had a different mission from that of the Indians. Their affections and longings were not fixed on the supersensible world only; they were fitted for the physical world of sense, and their feelings were drawn toward the earth. They valued what man is able to acquire on it, and what he is able to win by means of its forces. Their achievements as a warlike people, and the methods which they discovered of acquiring the earth's treasures, are connected with this peculiarity of their nature. There was no danger of their turning their backs upon the "illusion" of the physical senses in their yearning after the supersensible, but rather of their entirely severing the connection of their souls with the supersensible world, through their liking for the physical world.

The oracle-sanctuaries, which had been transferred hither from the ancient Atlantean territory, also reflected, in their own way, the general character of the nation. In them forces were present which it had formerly been possible to acquire through experiences in the supersensible

world, and which could still be controlled in certain lower forms; these forces were used in the sanctuaries to direct the phenomena of nature in such a way as to make them subserve man's personal interests. This ancient people still had a great mastery over those forces of nature which subsequently withdrew from the influence of the human will. The guardians of the oracles governed certain inner forces connected with fire and other elements. They might be called magicians. What supersensible knowledge and force they had retained as a heritage from ancient times was certainly slight in comparison with man's powers in the remote past. But it nevertheless took all kinds of forms, from noble arts, the only object of which was the welfare of humanity, down to the most reprehensible transactions.

The Lucifer influence held sway over these people in a peculiar manner. It had brought them into connection with everything which diverts mankind from the purposes of those exalted beings who alone would have guided human evolution, had not the Luciferian influence interposed. Even those members of the race who were still gifted with some remains of the old clairvoyant condition, described above as a state intermediate between sleeping and waking, felt themselves powerfully attracted by the lower beings of the spiritual world. In order to counteract these characteristic qualities it was necessary

that a spiritual impulse should be given to the nation. A leader was sent to it, by the guardian of the Mysteries of the Sun oracle, from the same source from which the spiritual life of ancient India proceeded.

The leader of ancient Persian civilization, who was sent by the guardian of the Sun oracle to the nation now under consideration, may be designated by the same name as the historical Zarathustra, or Zoroaster. Only the fact must be emphasized that the personality indicated belongs to a much earlier period than the historical possessor of the name. In this connection it is not a question of outer historical research, but of spiritual knowledge. And any one who instinctively thinks of a later time in connection with the bearer of the name Zarathustra may reconcile this idea with occult science on learning that the historical character represents himself as a successor of the first great Zarathustra, whose name he took, and in the spirit of whose teaching he worked.

The impulse which Zarathustra had to give to his people consisted in his showing them that the physical world of sense is not merely the lifeless material, devoid of spirit, which it appears to a man who gives himself up exclusively to the influence of the Lucifer nature. To this nature man owes his personal independence and sense of freedom; but these should work within him in

harmony with that spiritual nature which is their opposite. With the pre-historic Persians it was a question of keeping alive the sense of this last-named spiritual-nature. Through their affection for the physical world of sense they were threatened with complete absorption into the Luciferian beings. Now Zarathustra, through the guardian of the Sun oracle, had received such an Initiation as enabled him to receive the revelations of the great Sun-spirits. In particular states of his consciousness, brought about by his training, he was able to see the leader of the Sun-spirits, who, as described above, had taken under his protection the human etheric body.

Zarathustra knew that this spirit directs the course of human evolution, but that he must first, at a certain time, descend to earth out of cosmic space. For this purpose it was necessary that he should be able to live in a human astral body, just as, since the incoming of the Lucifer nature, he had worked in the etheric body. It was therefore necessary that a man should appear who had transformed the astral body back again up to such a level as it would have reached without Lucifer at a certain period in the past (the middle of the Atlantean evolution). Had Lucifer not appeared, man would certainly have attained this level before, but without personal independence or the possibility of freedom. Now, however, in spite of those qualities he was again to

rise to this height. Zarathustra, when endowed with prophetic vision, could see that in time to come a personality would be possible, within human evolution, who would have a suitable astral body for the purpose. But he also knew that the great Sun-spirit would not appear on earth before that time, though he could be perceived by a seer in the spiritual part of the Sun. By directing his seer's gaze to the Sun, Zarathustra was able to see this spirit, whom he proclaimed to his people. He announced that the Sun-spirit was at first to be found only in the spiritual world, but that later he would descend to earth.

This was the proclamation of the great Sun-spirit, or Spirit of Light (the aura of the Sun, Ahura-mazdao, Ormuzd). He was revealed to Zarathustra and his followers as the spirit who for the time being was turning the light of his countenance on man from the spiritual world, and who might be expected to appear within the human race in the future. It was Christ, before his appearance on earth, whom Zarathustra proclaimed as the Spirit of Light. On the other hand he represented Ahriman (Angra mainju) as a power working injuriously on the life of the human soul, if it engrosses that soul completely. This power is none other than the one described above, which had acquired special dominion over the earth since the betrayal of the Vulcan

Mysteries. Together with the message concerning the Light God, Zarathustra proclaimed teachings about those spiritual beings who are manifested to the seer's purified perception as associates of the Spirit of Light. These are in strong contrast to the tempters who appeared to the unpurified clairvoyance which was left over from the Atlantean period. It had to be made clear to the primitive Persians that in man's soul, so far as it is concentrated on work and struggle in the physical world of sense, a conflict is going on between the power of the Light God and his adversary. It had also to be shown them how man must act so as not to be engulfed through Ahriman, but so as to turn his influence to good through the might of the Light God.

The third era of post-Atlantean civilization began among the peoples who finally came together in western Asia and northern Africa after the migrations. This civilization was developed among the Chaldeans, Babylonians, and Assyrians on the one hand, and among the Egyptians on the other. In these nations the taste for the physical world of sense was developed in a different form from that which it had taken among the Persians. The former had acquired much more than other nations of the temper of mind lying at the root of the faculty of thought which has arisen since Atlantean times, that is, the gift of reason. Indeed, it was the mission of

post-Atlantean humanity to develop within itself those faculties of the soul which it was possible to acquire through the newly awakened powers of thought and feeling. These powers cannot be directly stimulated from the spiritual world, but result from man's observing the sense-world, becoming familiar with it, and working upon it. The conquest of the physical world of sense by these human faculties must be regarded as the mission of post-Atlantean humanity. Step by step does that conquest proceed.

In ancient India, man's attention was already, by the constitution of his soul, directed to the sense-world; but he still looked upon it as illusion, and his spirit turned to the supersensible world. In the Persian nation, on the contrary, there sprang up the endeavour to conquer the physical world of sense, but the attempt was still largely made with those powers of the soul which had been left over as an inheritance from the time when man could still reach the spiritual world directly. Among the peoples of the third epoch of civilization, the soul had for the most part lost the supersensible faculties. It was obliged to seek manifestations of the spiritual in the surrounding world of sense, and to continue its development by discovering the means of civilization existing in that world. Men sought to investigate, through the physical world of sense, the laws of the spiritual world underlying

it, and in this way human sciences arose. Human technical skill, artistic work, and the instruments and methods of these came about through the recognition and use of the forces of the spiritual world. To a man of the Chaldaic-Babylonian race the sense-world was no longer an illusion but a manifestation, in its different kingdoms, in mountains and seas, in air and water, of the spiritual activity of powers existing behind it, whose laws man was striving to learn.

To the Egyptian, the earth was a field of work, given to him in a condition which he must, by his own powers of intelligence, so transform that it should bear the impress of human power. From Atlantis, oracle-sanctuaries, originating chiefly from the Mercury oracle, had been transplanted to Egypt. Yet there were others as well,—for example, Venus oracles. A new seed of civilization was sown in what it was possible, through the oracle-sanctuaries, to cultivate in the Egyptian nation. This germ proceeded from a great leader who had received his training within the Persian Zarathustra Mysteries. (He was the reincarnated personality of a disciple of the great Zarathustra himself.) He may be called "Hermes." By accepting the Zarathustra Mysteries he was able to find the right way in which to guide the Egyptian nation. This nation had so turned its attention to the physical world of sense, during earthly life between birth and death, that it was able only

to a limited extent to behold directly the spirit-world behind phenomena, but yet recognized spiritual laws in the physical world. Thus it could not be taught about the spiritual world as one with which it could become familiar during earth-life. But, on the other hand, it could be shown how man will live, in the disembodied state after death, with the world of those spirits who, during earthly life, appear through their counterparts in the kingdom of physical sense.

Hermes taught that man qualifies himself for union with spiritual forces after death, in proportion as he uses his powers on earth for furthering the purposes of those spiritual forces. In particular, those who had worked most zealously in this way between birth and death would be united with the lofty Sun-spirit, Osiris. On the Chaldaic-Babylonian side of this stream of civilization the direction of the human mind toward the physical world of sense was more conspicuous than on the Egyptian side. The laws of that world were investigated, and on the basis of images of sense they were observed in spiritual archetypes. Yet in many respects the nation remained wedded to physical things. Instead of the star-spirit the star was put first, and instead of other spiritual beings their earthly counterparts were made prominent. Only the leaders attained to really deep knowledge concerning the laws of the super-sensible world and its connection with the

physical. The contrast between the knowledge of the Initiates and the perverted belief of the people asserted itself more strongly in these nations than anywhere else.

Quite different circumstances arose in those parts of southern Europe and western Asia where the fourth epoch of post-Atlantean civilization was unfolded. In harmony with occult science, it may be called the Greco-Roman period. Descendants of peoples inhabiting the most widely distant parts of the older world had met together in these countries. Here were oracle-sanctuaries which conformed to the various Atlantean oracles; here were people with the heritage of the ancient clairvoyance as a natural gift, and others who were able to acquire it, with comparative ease, by training. The traditions of the ancient Initiates were not only preserved in special places, but worthy successors to them arose, who attracted disciples capable of rising to lofty levels of spiritual vision. Moreover, these races had within them the impulse to create in the sense-world a domain in which the spirit should be expressed in physical substance in consummate forms.

Greek art is, among other things, a result of this impulse. It is only necessary to gaze with the eye of the spirit upon a Greek temple, in order to see that in this marvel of art material substance is so worked upon by man that it appears in every detail as the expression of spirit.

A Greek temple is a "House of the Spirit." In its forms may be perceived what otherwise is beheld only by the spiritual eye of the seer. A temple of Zeus (or Jupiter) is so constructed as to present to the eye of sense a fitting shrine for what the guardian of the Zeus, or Jupiter, Initiation saw with spiritual vision. And it is the same with all Greek art. The wisdom teachings of the Initiates flowed in mysterious ways into poets, artists, and thinkers. The Mysteries of the Initiates are found again, in the form of conceptions and ideas, in the systems of thought by which the ancient Greek philosophers interpreted the universe. The influences of the spiritual life, the Mysteries of the Asiatic and African sanctuaries of Initiation, flowed into these nations and their leaders. The great Indian teachers, the associates of Zarathustra, and the followers of Hermes had attracted disciples. These, or their successors, thereupon founded sanctuaries for Initiation, in which the ancient wisdom was revived in a new form. These were the Mysteries of the ancient world. Here disciples were prepared for being brought into the conditions of consciousness through which they might attain vision of the spiritual world.¹ From these sanctuaries of Initiation the Mysteries flowed forth to those who cultivated Spiritual Mysteries

¹More detailed information about these Mysteries of the ancient world is to be found in my book, *Das Christentum als mystische Tatsache*. More particulars will be given in the last chapter of the present work.

in Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. (Important centres of Initiation were formed in the Greek world in the Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries. In Pythagoras's school of wisdom the great wisdom teachings and methods of remote antiquity were in force. Pythagoras, on his distant travels, had been initiated into the secrets of the most various kinds of Mysteries.)

* * *

But human life between birth and death in the post-Atlantean period had also an influence on the disembodied state after death. The more man's interests were fixed on the physical world of sense, the greater was the possibility of Ahri-man's getting a hold over the soul during earthly life and retaining his power over it after death. This danger was least among the peoples of ancient India, for during earthly life they had felt the physical world of sense to be an illusion, and hence had eluded the power of Ahriman after death. So much the greater was the danger for the primitive Persian peoples, who between birth and death had fixed their attention, with great interest, on the physical world of sense. They would have largely fallen a prey to Ahriman's wiles had not Zarathustra pointed out, in an impressive way, through his teaching concerning the Light God, that behind the physical world of sense there exists that of the Spirits of Light. In proportion as the people of this civilization had been able to

receive into their souls something out of the world of thought thus created, so far were they able to escape Ahriman's clutches during earthly life, and thereby elude him in the life after death, by which they were to be prepared for a new earth-life. The power of Ahriman in earthly life tends to make the physical sense-existence appear to be the only one, and thus to bar the way to any vista of a spiritual world. His power in the spiritual world leads man to complete isolation, and to the concentration of all his interest upon himself. Those who, at the time of death, are in Ahriman's power, are born again as egoists.

It is now possible for occult science to describe life between death and a new birth as it really is, if the Ahriman influence has been, up to a certain point, overcome. It has been so described by the writer in other works and in the first chapters of this book, and it must be so described if it is to be made clear what *can* be experienced by man in this mode of existence, if he has attained to pure spiritual vision of what has really taken place. The degree in which the individual makes this experience is dependent on the extent to which he has overcome the Ahriman influence.

Man is approaching nearer and nearer to what it is possible for him to become in the spiritual world. How his progress may be interfered with by other influences must be clearly grasped in our present review of the course of human evolution.

Hermēs saw to it that the people of the Egyptian nation should prepare, during earthly life, for communion with the Spirit of Light. But because at that time human interests between birth and death were already so constituted that it was only possible to see in a slight degree through the veil of physical sense, the spiritual vision of the soul after death was also troubled. Perception of the world of light remained dim.

The obscuration of the spiritual world after death reached a climax in the souls who passed into the disembodied state out of a body belonging to the Greco-Roman civilization. During their earthly life they had brought to perfection the cultivation of the physical sense-existence, and had thus condemned themselves to a shadowy existence after death. Hence the Greek felt life after death to be a shadowy existence, and it is not mere rhetoric but the realization of truth when the hero of that time, who is given up to the life of sense, says, "Better a beggar on earth than a king in the realm of shades." All this was still more marked in those Asiatic peoples who had fixed their attention with veneration and worship on material images instead of on their spiritual archetypes. A large proportion of mankind was in this condition at the time of the Greco-Roman era of civilization. It can be seen how man's mission in post-Atlantean times, which consisted in the conquest of the physical world of sense,

must necessarily conduce to estrangement from the spiritual world. Thus does greatness in one respect necessarily involve deterioration in another.

Man's connection with the spiritual world was kept alive in the Mysteries. Through these the Initiates, in special states of the soul, were able to receive revelations from that world. They were more or less the successors of the guardians of the Atlantean oracles. To them was revealed what had been hidden through the interposition of Lucifer and Ahriman. Lucifer concealed from man what had flowed in from the spiritual world upon the human astral body, without its coöperation, up to the middle of the Atlantean period. Had the etheric body not been partially separated from the physical body, man would have been able to experience within himself this part of the spiritual world as an inner revelation to his soul. As a result of Lucifer's interference, this could be done only in special states of the soul. At those times a spiritual world appeared to man in the guise of the astral. The corresponding spiritual beings manifested themselves in forms which embodied only the higher principles of human nature, and in those principles the symbols of the particular spiritual forces were astrally visible. Superhuman forms were manifested in this way.

After the interposition of Ahriman, another kind of Initiation was added to this one. Ahriman concealed everything in the spiritual world which

would have appeared behind physical sense-perception, had he not intervened from the middle of the Atlantean period onward. The Initiates of the Mysteries owed the revelation of what he had kept hidden to the circumstance that they were exercising within their souls all those faculties which man had gained since that time, and were exercising them to a degree beyond what is necessary for obtaining impressions of the life of physical sense. Thus there were revealed to them the spiritual powers lying behind the forces of nature. They could speak of spiritual beings behind nature. The creative powers working in nature-forces were unveiled to them. That part of Saturn, the Sun, and the old Moon which had gone on working, and had formed the physical, etheric, and astral bodies of man, as well as the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, was what formed the content of one kind of Mysteries, that is, those which Ahriman kept concealed. What had led to the sentient, rational, and self-conscious souls, and had been hidden from man by Lucifer, was revealed in the second kind of Mysteries.

But what the Mysteries could only prophesy was that in the fulness of time a man would appear possessing an astral body which, despite Lucifer, could become conscious of the light-world of the Sun-spirit through the etheric body, apart from any special condition of the soul. And the physical body of that human being would necessarily

be such that everything would be manifest to it in the spiritual world which it is possible for Ahriman, up to the time of physical death, to conceal. Physical death could bring no change into the life of such a being, that is to say, could have no power over his life. The ego so comes into manifestation in him that the entire spiritual nature is comprehended within the physical life. Such a being is the vehicle of the Spirit of Light, up to whom the Initiate ascends from two directions, being led, in special conditions of the soul, either to the Spirit of the Superhuman or to that behind the forces of nature. When the Initiates of the Mysteries foretold the appearance, in the fulness of time, of such a human being, they were prophets of the Christ.

A personality arose, as the special prophet of this manifestation to come, within a nation which possessed through natural inheritance the qualities of the peoples of western Asia, and through education the learning of the Egyptians. This was the Hebrew nation, and the prophet was Moses. The influences of Initiation had entered so deeply into his soul that in certain states of consciousness there was revealed to him the spirit who had undertaken, in regular course of evolution, to shape human consciousness from the Moon. In thunder and lightning Moses realized not merely physical phenomena but manifestations of this spirit. At the same time

the other kind of Mysteries had influenced his soul, so that he was able to distinguish, in astral vision, how the superhuman becomes human by means of the ego. Thus, from two directions, he who was to come was revealed to Moses as the highest form of the ego.

And in Christ the lofty Sun-spirit appeared in human form as the great ideal for human life on earth. At his coming, all mystery-wisdom had in some respects to take a new form. Up to that time this wisdom had existed exclusively for the purpose of inducing man to put himself into a condition of soul in which he would be able to view the kingdom of the Sun-spirit *outside* earthly evolution. Henceforth it was the mission of Mystery teaching to make man capable of recognizing in the Christ, incarnate in human nature, the original principle of being. From this central point of all wisdom, man was enabled to understand the natural and spiritual worlds.¹

At that point in his life at which the astral body of Christ Jesus contained everything which it is possible for the Lucifer influence to conceal, he came forward as the teacher of humanity. From that moment there was implanted in human earthly evolution the faculty for assimilating that wisdom by means of which the physical goal of the earth may gradually be reached. At the

¹What there is to be said further on this subject will be given in a later chapter dealing with supersensible knowledge.

moment when the event of Golgotha was accomplished, human nature was endowed with another faculty, that by which Ahriman's influence may be turned to good. Henceforth man was able to take with him through the gate of death that which saves him from isolation in the spiritual world. What happened in Palestine was the central point not only of human physical evolution but also of the other worlds to which man belongs; and when the "Mystery of Golgotha" had been accomplished, when the "death of the cross" had been endured, Christ appeared in that world where souls sojourn after death, and set limits to the power of Ahriman. From that moment the region which the Greeks had called the "realm of shades" was illuminated by spiritual light, which showed its inhabitants that the darkness was no longer to continue. What had been gained for the physical world by the "Mystery of Golgotha" cast light also into the spiritual world.

Up to this event, human post-Atlantean evolution had been a time of ascent in the physical world of sense, but of descent as far as the spiritual world was concerned. Everything which flowed into the sense-world proceeded from what had been in the spiritual world from remote ages. Since the coming of Christ, those who attain to the Mystery of Christ are able to take with them into the spiritual what they have won in the physical world. And from the spiritual world

it then flows back again into the earthly world of sense, since reincarnated souls, on reëntering life, bring with them what they have gained through the Christ impulse in the spiritual world between death and a new birth.

What flowed into human evolution in consequence of the coming of Christ worked in it like a seed. Little by little does a seed mature. Only a very limited proportion of the profound depths of the new wisdom has up to the present time flowed into physical existence. This existence is only now at the beginning of Christian evolution, which during the periods successively following on the coming of Christ, has only been able to disclose as much of its inner nature as individuals and nations were capable of receiving, and as their power of thought was able to realize. The first form into which this essence of Christianity could be poured may be described as a comprehensive ideal of life. As such it was opposed to those forms of life which had been developed in post-Atlantean humanity. The conditions operating in human evolution since the re-population of the earth in the Lemurian period have been described above. In accordance with these conditions, the souls of human beings are descended from various spirits who were incarnated, from other worlds, in the bodily descendants of the ancient Lemurians. The various races of man are a consequence of this fact; and the most

diverse vital interests appeared in these reincarnated souls, as a result of their Karma. As long as all this was being worked out, there could be no ideal of "universal humanity." Human nature originated in unity, but earthly evolution up to the present time has led to division. In the person of Christ an ideal is given which opposes every idea of separation, for in the man who bears the name of Christ there lives the lofty Sun-spirit in whom every human ego finds its first cause. The Hebrew nation still felt itself to be a nation, and each individual Jew to be a member of that nation. When once the mere idea was apprehended that in Christ Jesus there lives the ideal human being on whom the conditions of separation have no effect, Christianity became the ideal of universal brotherhood. The feeling that the inmost ego of each human being has the same origin, overstepped the bounds of all separate interests and private relationships. (The mutual Father of the human race appears beyond all earthly progenitors. "I and the Father are one.")

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries after Christ, the era of civilization in which we are still living was being prepared. It was gradually to break up the fourth, or Greco-Roman civilization. It is the fifth post-Atlantean period. The races which, after many wanderings and the most varied fortunes, became the vehicles of this new

civilization were descendants of those Atlanteans who had remained less affected than others by what had meanwhile been going on during the four preceding periods of civilization. They had not penetrated into the countries in which those respective civilizations took root. On the contrary, they had, in their way, handed on Atlantean forms of civilization. There were many among them who had retained in a high degree the inheritance of the ancient dim clairvoyance, the state described above as intermediate between sleeping and waking. Such people knew the spiritual world from their own experience, and could reveal to their fellow-men what takes place there. Thus there sprang up a great number of narratives of spiritual beings and events, and the national treasures of legends and sagas had their origin in spiritual experiences of this kind. For the dim clairvoyance lasted on, in many people, into times not far removed from the present. There were other people who, although they had lost clairvoyance, nevertheless developed the faculties they acquired for use in the physical world of sense, in accordance with feelings and emotions which corresponded to clairvoyant experiences. And even the Atlantean oracles had their successors in the new civilization.

There were everywhere Mysteries, but in them the Mystery of Initiation was most cultivated, which leads to the unveiling of that part of the

spirit-world which Ahriman keeps hidden. The spiritual powers existing behind the forces of nature were here revealed. In the mythologies of European nations are contained the remnants of what the Initiates of these Mysteries were able to disclose to men. It is true that these mythologies also contain the other kind of mystery, although in a more imperfect form than that in which the Southern and Eastern Mysteries possessed it. Superhuman beings were also known in Europe, but they were seen to be in perpetual conflict with the associates of Lucifer. And the Light God too was proclaimed, but in such a form that it was doubtful whether he would overcome Lucifer. On the other hand, these Mysteries were illuminated by the appearance of the future form of the Christ. Of him it was announced that his kingdom would break up the kingdom of that other Light God.¹

From such influences as these, there came about a cleavage in the soul of the people of the fifth epoch of civilization which still continues, and is manifest in the most diverse phenomena. The soul had not retained from ancient times a sufficiently strong attraction toward spiritual things to enable it to hold fast the connection between the worlds of spirit and sense. The attraction existed only as a training of feeling and emotion,

¹All sagas concerning the twilight of the gods, and similar traditions, had their origin in this knowledge of the Mysteries in Europe.

not as direct vision of the spiritual world. On the other hand, man's gaze was more and more directed toward the world of sense, and the conquest of that world; and the intellectual powers which had been awakened in the last part of the Atlantean period, all those human powers of which the physical brain is the instrument, were concentrated upon the sense-world, and on gaining knowledge of and mastery over it. Two worlds, so to speak, were developed within man. One is directed toward the life of physical sense; the other is susceptible to the manifestations of the spirit in such a way as to permeate the spirit with feeling and emotion, though without intuitive vision. The tendency to this cleavage of soul was already existing when the teaching concerning the Christ was introduced into various European countries.

This message from the spiritual world was received into men's hearts, and feeling and emotion became permeated with it; but it was not possible to bridge the gulf between this state of soul and what human intelligence, concentrated on the sense-world, was investigating in the sphere of physical existence. What is now known as the contradiction between external science and spiritual knowledge is merely a consequence of this fact. The Christian mysticism of Eckhart, Tauler, and others is a result of the permeation of feeling and emotion by Christianity. Science directed

exclusively on the world of sense, and the effects of science on life, are the result of the other tendency of the soul, and all achievements in the sphere of outer material civilization are due to the divergence of the two tendencies. Since those human faculties of which the brain is the instrument were concentrated exclusively on physical life, they were able to reach that pitch of perfection which makes contemporary science, technical arts, and other forms of mental life possible. Such a material civilization could originate only among the nations of Europe, for they are those descendants of Atlantean ancestors who only converted their bent toward the physical world of sense into faculty, when it had reached a certain degree of maturity. Previously they had allowed it to lie dormant, and had lived on what was left them of Atlantean clairvoyance and on the communications of their Initiates. While mental culture was outwardly quite given up to these influences, there slowly ripened the desire for the material conquest of the world.

Nevertheless, the dawn of the sixth post-Atlantean era of civilization is already at hand, for what is to arise at a certain time in human evolution ripens slowly in the preceding age. What it is now possible to develop in its early beginnings is the discovery of the thread binding together the two tendencies of human nature, that toward material civilization and that toward life in the

spiritual world. For this it is necessary that, on the one hand, the results of spiritual vision should be understood; on the other, that the manifestations of the spirit should be recognized in the observations and experiences of the sense-world. The sixth period of civilization will bring the harmony between these two to full perfection.

We have now reached a point in our studies at which they may pass from the consideration of the past to that of the future. But it is better that this outlook should be preceded by an account of the knowledge which has been attained concerning the higher world and Initiation. Afterwards a survey of the future, as far as is possible within the limits of this work, will be briefly added.

In the explanation of the effect of the Christ-being on human evolution, only the more external aspect has been described. The inner side will be dealt with in the account of Initiation.

CHAPTER V

THE PERCEPTION OF HIGHER WORLDS

(Concerning Initiation)

AT his present stage of development, man ordinarily lives between birth and death in three conditions of the soul: those of waking, of sleeping, and again, between these two, in that of the dream state. It is my intention to allude briefly to this latter state in a subsequent portion of this book. For the present, however, we will content ourselves with taking a survey of life under its two chief alternating conditions, those of waking and of sleeping.

Cognizance of higher worlds is obtained by man when, in addition to sleeping and waking, he attains to yet a third soul-state. While awake the soul is given up, as it were, to the impressions of the senses, and to such concepts as are excited by sense-impressions. During sleep, however, not only is sense-impression latent, but the soul itself loses its consciousness, the events of the day being merged in an ocean of unconsciousness.

Let us now imagine that the soul might become conscious during sleep, even if sense-impressions were absent, as is the case under conditions of deep sleep. Even the memory of the day's happenings would not be present. Yet, would

the soul then find itself in a state of vacuity? Would it be incapable of having any experiences? This is a question that can only be answered if the conditions under discussion can actually be set up. If the soul is capable of experiencing anything, even when sense-experience and recollection of such experiences are lacking, then would that soul, so far as the external world is concerned, be "asleep"; and yet the soul would not be asleep, but awake to an actual world.

This is a condition of consciousness which can be brought about by those who follow the directions given them by occult science and who apply the same to their soul's experience. And everything the soul may communicate about those worlds which transcend the senses, has been discovered under similar conditions of consciousness.

In the foregoing portions of this book certain communications have been made as to the higher worlds; and in the following pages as much as may be said in such a book will be told as to the means by which the condition of consciousness requisite for such studies may be acquired.

Only in one way does this state of consciousness resemble that of sleep; and this is in the fact that owing to it all outward activity of the senses ceases, and all thoughts, such as might be aroused by the action of the senses, likewise vanish. But whereas, in ordinary sleep, the soul is without the power requisite for conscious experience, it is

this very power that the aforesaid state of consciousness is to place in its possession. And, by its aid, capacity is given to the soul that will enable it to be alive to such experiences as, under the ordinary conditions of life, can be brought about only by the action of the senses. The awakening of the soul to such a higher state of consciousness is called Initiation.

The methods of initiation lead man away from the state of ordinary day-consciousness into a condition of the soul during which he makes use of spiritual organs of observation. The embryos of these organs are dormant in each soul, and for their development require cultivation. Now it may come to pass that a person at some definite point of his earthly career makes the discovery for himself of the development of these higher organs within his soul, and in such cases we have to do with a kind of self-awakening. Such a person will become conscious of a change affecting his entire being; his soul's experiences will have been enriched beyond measure. He will then find that no experience gained in the exterior world has at any time possessed the power of so spiritualizing and satisfying his condition of being, of suffusing it with such a sense of inner warmth, as does this experience to which he has now obtained access, invisible though it be to the physical eye and eluding the physical touch. From this spiritual world, power, and a sense of

life's security, will flow in upon him, strengthening his will.

There are instances of such self-initiation; but they should not give rise to the belief that the only right course is to wait for the coming of such self-initiation, and to abstain from doing aught in the way of regular training with a view to bringing about initiation. We need not here give further space to the subject of self-initiation, for the very reason that it takes place spontaneously, as it were, and without regard to rules of any kind whatsoever.

What we have here to consider is how training may develop those rudimentary organs of the soul destined as instruments for the higher perception. Those who do not feel themselves specially impelled toward doing something for their own development may easily say that man stands under the guidance of spiritual powers, that such guidance should therefore not be interfered with, and that the moment deemed by those powers the right one for revealing to the soul another world should be awaited in patience. Indeed, persons who are of this opinion are inclined to deem it a kind of presumption, or unjustifiable curiosity, for any one to interfere with the wisdom of such spiritual guidance.

Such as are of this way of thinking will change their opinion only if some other mode of presenting the case makes a sufficiently strong impression on

them. If they were to say to themselves, "Yonder wise guidance has endowed me with certain faculties, and has done so not that I should let them be idle but rather that I should use them. Indeed, the very wisdom of such guidance lies in the fact of its having placed in me the rudiments of those organs necessary for the higher state of consciousness. I can, therefore, rightly comprehend this guidance only when I regard it as my duty to do everything in my power that may serve to bring such rudimentary growths to their proper development." Should such thoughts make a sufficiently strong impression on the mind, doubts as to the rightfulness of such training for the attainment of the higher consciousness will disappear.

There is, it is true, another scruple which may arise in the mind with regard to such schooling. A person might say to himself: "This development of the inner faculties of the soul means a dire invasion of man's most hidden sanctuary. It involves a certain change of the entire human being: the means of such a change cannot be evolved by any ordinary procedure of thought, for the manner in which such higher worlds are attained can be known only to those to whom the path has become visible by reason of experience. If, therefore, I turn to such a one, I am allowing him to exercise his influence over the innermost sanctuary of my soul." Any one given to this

attitude of mind will hardly find it reassuring if the means for inducing such states of higher consciousness are imparted to him in book form. For it is not a question of receiving communications either verbally or from some person who, having the knowledge, has set the same down in a book to which we have access. Now there are people possessing a knowledge of the rules for developing the spiritual organs of perception who are of opinion that these rules ought not to be entrusted to a book. These people for the most part look upon the communication of certain truths relating to the spiritual world as inadmissible. But this view must be characterized as in a certain sense out of date in view of the present stage of human evolution. It is true that the communication of the rules referred to can be made only up to a certain point. Yet what is imparted leads so far that one who applies it to his soul-life makes such progress in knowledge that he is able to go on by himself. The way then leads onward in a manner of which a true idea can be gained only through what has been previously experienced. From all these facts scruples may arise about the path to spiritual knowledge.

Such doubts as have here been brought forward vanish as soon as we clearly apprehend the nature of a process of development for which, in our present generation, the school of training here

inculcated is more particularly adapted. This method is here to be spoken of, while other schools will also be briefly referred to.

The training now to be dealt with places in the hand of him who may possess the will to undertake his own higher development, such means as will enable him to set about that work of transformation. Any questionable encroachment on the personality of the student would only then be possible, should the teacher proceed to carry out the change by methods which withdraw the consciousness of the pupil. But no true teacher of occult science in our day would make use of any such method, by which, indeed, the pupil would be reduced to a blind tool. The teacher gives his pupil instructions as to the rules of conduct he is to pursue, and he leaves it to the pupil to carry them out. At the same time, should the case seem to demand it, the teacher does not withhold the reasons justifying these rules of conduct.

The acceptance of the rules, and their application by a person seeking spiritual development, need not be a matter of blind belief. Such a belief ought to be quite out of the question in this sphere. One who studies the nature of the human soul as far as it can be followed by ordinary self-observation, without occult training, may, after accepting the rules recommended by 'spiritual training, ask himself, "How do these rules act

in the life of the soul?" This question may be satisfactorily answered, before any training, by a dispassionate use of common sense. Before these rules are adopted, true conceptions may be gained as to the way in which they operate. Of course the process can be *experienced* only during training, but even then the experience will always be accompanied by an understanding of the experience, if each step that is to be taken is tested by sound judgment. And for the present, true spiritual science will only suggest such rules for training as can be vindicated by sound judgment. Those who have the will to surrender to these conditions of confidence only, and who by no manner of predisposing prejudice are inclined to surrender in blind faith, will find all doubts pass from them, and objections brought against a regular course of training with the aim of attaining to higher states of consciousness will no longer disturb them.

Even such people as may have arrived at this state of inward maturity,—a maturity which sooner or later would lead to the self-awakening of these spiritual organs of perception,—even for such as these, training is by no means superfluous. On the contrary, training is specially adapted for them. For there are but few cases in which personal initiation has not to travel along tortuous and devious ways, and training spares them the traversing of such by-paths, leading them forward

It may easily happen that such a soul possesses a certain *dim intuition* of its own ripeness, and by reason of this very feeling may assume an attitude of disinclination toward training. A feeling of this kind may be the result of a certain degree of pride, which refuses to place confidence in a teacher. Then again, a special degree of soul-development may, in some persons, lie concealed up to a particular age, only then revealing itself, and in such cases training may be the very means needed to call forth its appearance. Should the person then hold aloof from such training, it may then be that the power will remain dormant during that term of life, and only reassert itself in the course of future incarnations.

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The uplifting to a higher state of consciousness can only proceed from a condition of ordinary waking day-consciousness. It is in this consciousness that the soul lives prior to its uplifting, and training will endow it with the means which lead to a transcending of such consciousness. The training to be first noticed advises in the first instance such measures as may still be taken during ordinary waking consciousness. Indeed, those methods which are the most significant

consist in quiet acts performed by the soul. This requires that the soul should give itself up to particular conceptions, and these conceptions are such as are able by their very nature to exercise an awakening power over certain hidden faculties of the inner nature of man. They thereby differ from those conceptions of the waking daily life, the object of which, in the first instance, is of another kind, namely, that of presenting external objects. The more faithfully they present these things, the truer they are. It is, indeed, in accordance with their nature that they should be true in this sense, but this is not the mission of those conceptions which the soul is to consider, when its object is the pursuit of spiritual training; and they are therefore so formed as not to present anything external, having rather within themselves the power to act upon the soul. These presentments are emblematic, or symbolic.

Yet other conceptions may be used. For it does not depend at all on what the conceptions contain, but solely on the fact that the soul puts forth all its powers in order not to have anything in the consciousness except the conception in question. Whereas, in the ordinary life of the soul, its forces are divided among many things and the conceptions rapidly change, the important point in spiritual training is the concentration of the whole inner life on one conception. And this conception must be voluntarily brought to

the centre of the consciousness. Symbolic conceptions are better than those which reflect outer objects or events, because the latter are in touch with the outer world, and the soul has to depend less on itself than in the case of symbolic conceptions, formed out of its own inner energy. The chief object at which to aim is the *intensity* of the force to be exercised by the soul. It is not what is before the soul that is essential, but the greatness of the effort and the length of time during which it is concentrated on one conception. Strength ascends from unknown depths of the soul, from which it is drawn up by concentration on one conception. Occult science contains many such, all of which have been proved to possess the power alluded to above.

The important thing is to apply these conceptions in the right manner. This is accomplished by the practice of so-called withdrawing, or meditation. But a certain kind of this inner absorption has first to be considered in connection with symbolical conceptions, and we are enabled more readily to grasp this mode of meditation when we begin by recalling to the soul the conception of some memory. Say, for instance, that we allow the eye to rest on a tree, and then turn away from the object so that it is no longer presented to our sight; we shall, nevertheless, be able to retain the image of the tree in the soul. Now this image or conception of the tree which

we have, when it is no longer in sight, is a recollection of the tree. We will then take it that this recollection is retained in the soul, and allow the soul to repose, as it were, in this recollection, taking care to exclude all other conceptions from the memory. The soul then dwells in that memory-conception of the tree, and we then have to do with the withdrawal of the soul into a conception. Yet this conception is the impression of an actual thing conceived through the senses, and for this reason it cannot, in the sense above specified, be qualified to be an instrument for awakening the faculties of the soul. If, however, the same process is entered upon, selecting instead one of those conceptions which have already been tested by occult science, one then becomes able by degrees to attain this result.

One example only of meditation based upon a symbolical conception shall now be placed before the reader. Such a conception must first be built up in the soul, and this may be done in the following manner. We may think of a plant, calling to mind how it is rooted in the ground, the way in which leaf after leaf shoots forth, until finally the blossom, too, unfolds. And then we may imagine a human being placed beside this plant, and we call up in our soul the thought that this being has qualities and characteristics which, when compared with those of the plant, will be found to be more perfect. We dwell on the fact

that this being is able to move here and there, according to his will and his desires, while the plant remains stationary, rooted in the soil.

Then, however, it may be said: "Man certainly has attained to a higher stage of perfection than the plant, yet I can call to mind qualities in man which are not present in the plant, the absence of which, indeed, seems in a certain way to make the plant more perfect than man. Man is full of passions and desires, and these he follows in his actions. I can take count of errors committed by reason of his impulses and his passions, whereas in the plant I may note how the pure law of its growth is passed on from leaf to leaf, and how the passionless blossom opens its petals to the pure rays of the sun." Then I can say: "Man is possessed of certain faculties which exceed those of the plant, but he has attained these at the cost of allowing his impulses, passions, and desires to commingle in his being with the purer forces I seem to recognize in the plant." And then I call to mind the green sap flowing through the plant, and conceive it to be the expression of the pure and passionless law of growth. Next I call to mind the red blood as it courses through the veins of man, and recognizing this as expressive of man's instincts, of his passions and desires, I construct from all these things an intense and powerful thought within my soul. I then ponder on man's capacity for development; I conceive

how his very instincts, passions, and desires may be purged and cleansed by the higher faculties of his soul; and I meditate on how the dross in such qualities is driven out, the qualities themselves being, as it were, reborn upon a higher plane, so that the blood may finally be called to mind as the expression of passion and desire, cleansed and purified.

Now I gaze in spirit on the rose, saying to myself: "In the red juice of the rose is the erstwhile green sap of the plant—now changed to crimson—and the red rose follows the same pure, passionless laws of growth as does the green leaf." Thus the red of the rose may offer me a symbol of a kind of blood which is the expression of cleansed impulses and passions, purged of all lower elements, and resembling in their purity the forces working in the red rose. This thought I seek not only to bring home to my intelligence but to vivify in my feelings; and I may experience a sensation of bliss if I conceive the purity and passionless nature of the growing plant, while I can produce in myself the feeling that certain higher perfections must be purchased through the possession of passions and desires. Here, then, is a thought that can transform the soul's blissful feeling just conceived into a more serious feeling, while in its wake a sensation of liberating happiness may stir within me, if I yield to this thought of the red blood that can thus become the vehicle of inward and pure

experiences, even as is the case with the red juice of the rose. But all depends upon not entering upon this line of thought, requisite for the construction of such symbols, without feeling being present; and after the trend of these thoughts and feelings has been pursued, it is well to transform them into the following symbolical conception. Imagine before you a black cross, and let this stand as the symbol of the annihilated lower part of the passions and desires, and then, there where the beams of the cross traverse each other, imagine seven bright red roses ranged in a circle. Those roses are, then, the symbol of that blood which is the expression of cleansed and purified passions and desires.¹

This symbolical conception has now to be called up before the soul, as has been illustrated before, by a memory-conception. A conception such as this, when it has become the object of concentration and meditation, has an awakening power, and every other idea must for the time be excluded from the mind. This one symbol must mentally float before the soul as distinctly as possible.

¹It is a matter of no moment whatever whether the above thoughts are warranted or not by any of the views held by natural science. For the object is to develop such thoughts about the plant and man as may—irrespective of all theories—be gained by the means of simple and direct contemplation. Such thoughts are of importance side by side with no less significant theoretical presentments of things in the external world; and here the thoughts are not adduced in order to prove a fact scientifically, but so to construct a symbol that shall prove effective, irrespective of whatever objections may be raised by this or that person against its construction.

It is not without significance that this symbol has been introduced as no mere awakening presentment, but has been built up from certain conceptions touching the nature of plant and man. For the effect of such a symbol depends upon the fact of its being put together in this definite manner, before employing it as an instrument for meditation. Should it be called up without a previous process of construction such as has here been delineated, the picture must remain cold and will be far less effective than if it had by previous preparation gathered force wherewith to animate the soul. While meditating, however, all the preparatory thoughts should not be called into the soul, the image alone being allowed to float, as if it were alive, before the mind, and at the same time the feeling allowed to vibrate which has been called into being by the thoughts that led up to it. Thus the symbol becomes a sign, connected with an inner experience. And the dwelling of the soul in this experience is that which produces the desired effect. The longer the time during which it is possible to do this, without other conceptions arising to impose a disturbing element, the stronger will be the effect of the entire process.

Nevertheless, it is advisable for the student to bestow some extra time, over and above that devoted to actual meditation, on repeating the building up of the picture by thoughts and

feelings, in the way described above, and the greater the patience brought to bear in performing these acts of repetition, the more important will prove the impression made on the soul by that picture.¹

A symbol such as has just been described represents no external object or entity evolved by nature, and for this very reason it possesses a quickening power for certain inner faculties. Some people might, it is true, object to this, saying, "The rosy cross as a whole is of course no product of nature; nevertheless, each separate part of it—as, for instance, the black colour and the roses—may be perceived by the senses." But any one on whom the objection here raised tends to act as a disturbing influence should remember that it is not the presentation of these sense-objects to which the quickening influence of the higher faculties of the soul is due, but purely the manner in which the conjunction of the separate parts has been effected; it is this that is productive of the desired result. This conjunction does not reproduce anything that is present in the world of the senses.

¹In my explanations of "How to attain Knowledge of the Higher Worlds," translated under the title of *The Way of Initiation* and beginning at Chapter II, several other examples of methods of meditation are given, and especially efficacious will be found one which deals with the coming into being and fading away of a plant; also another may be particularly recommended, based on the dormant formative power dwelling in the seed of a plant, and others on the form and structure of crystals, and other substances, but from the abundant materials for meditation presenting themselves I have in this instance selected one in order to show the nature of meditation.

Such a symbol is intended as an example to show the process of efficacious meditation for the soul. Manifold pictures of this kind are prescribed in occult training which are constructed, or built up, according to varying methods. Certain sentences, formulæ, and also single words may also be given out to the student upon which he will have to meditate, and in every case the means used have the same object, namely, that of severing the soul from the perception of the senses and unfolding in it those slumbering activities to which the impressions of the physical senses are without moment or importance—the unfolding of those slumbering faculties of the soul being alone the all-essential.

There are, further, meditations the subjects of which are the feelings, emotions, and so on. Such are found to be especially efficacious. Let us take the feeling of joy. In the normal course of life the soul is prone to experience pleasure when the engendering cause is something external. If a healthily constituted soul perceives some act performed by a person, indicative of the doer's goodness of heart, then the soul will assuredly feel pleasure at the deed thus performed. But the soul is further able to reflect upon an act of this kind, and can say to itself that an act done from sheer kindness of heart is one in which the doer is following the interests of his fellow-creatures rather than his own, and such an act may be

called morally good. But the soul, while contemplating, may free itself during the conception of any particular case in the outer world which has given it joy or pleasure, and instead may construct for itself the general idea of goodness of heart. It might think, for instance, of how kindness of heart might come into being through one soul drawing up within itself, as it were, all the interests pertaining to some others, making the interests of those other souls its own. The soul thus meditating is now in a position to rejoice at the moral idea of such goodness of heart.

Here, therefore, we have not the pleasure which may be brought about by this or that occurrence in the world of the senses, but pleasure in an idea as such. And if the student tries to concentrate for some space of time upon such joy as is here indicated, allowing it to become a living factor in his soul, this may be called meditating upon a feeling or sentiment. But the potent agent here, to which the awakening of the inner faculties of the soul is due, is not the idea, but rather the sustained sway within the soul of an impression which has not originated in any feeling due to external impressions.

Occult science being in a position to penetrate far deeper into the being of things than can be done by ordinary presentment, the teacher will be able to indicate to the pupil feelings and sentiments which are much more powerful as awakening

agents for the unfolding of the soul's faculties when used as subjects of meditation. Yet, necessary as this will be for the higher degrees of training, it should be remembered that energetic meditating upon subjects such as kindness of heart may carry the student very far on his way.

The natures of people being so different, it is obvious that for particular individuals special methods of training become necessary. As to the duration of time to be devoted to meditation, we may remind the student that the greater the length of time during which he can meditate uninterruptedly, the stronger will be the effect called forth. But every excess in these matters may become injurious. In time, however, the student will probably become conscious of a certain inward "marking of time"—the result of this habitual meditation—which will thus automatically indicate the length of time to which he is to keep. Those who pursue their studies in occult science under the personal guidance of a teacher will receive from him precise instruction and advice in these particulars. Nevertheless, it must be emphatically understood that experienced occultists alone are in a position to impart such advice.

Such exercises in inward concentration will generally require practising for some considerable time before the student can become aware of any result. What is essential to occult science is patience

and perseverance. He who is unable to awaken these qualities and who cannot pursue his exercises with continued quietude, so as to render these qualities the fundamental tones, as it were, of his soul, can never expect to make great progress.

From what has been said above, the reader may now have gathered that meditation is a means of acquiring knowledge of the higher worlds, yet that not any subject-matter taken at random is productive of this result, but only such as experience gained in occult science has found suitable, provided it is carried out in the manner just narrated.

The path here indicated leads in the first place to what is called imaginative knowledge, and this is the first step toward the higher knowledge. Cognizance, dependent on sense-perceptions and on the working up of such perceptions by reason, which is sense-bound, is, to use the occult term, known as "objective cognition." Beyond this step rise others, the imaginative stage being, as we have said, the first. Now the term "imagination" might conduce to raise suspicion in the minds of some, to whom imagination stands for much the same as "invention,"—for conceptions, in short, which lack reality. In occult science, however, by "imaginative" must be understood that kind of conception that is called into being by the soul in its state of higher consciousness: the things perceived in this state of consciousness are spiritual

facts, and spiritual beings, to which the senses have no access, and—since this condition of the soul is caused by meditating upon symbols, or “innaginations”—the sphere to which this condition of higher consciousness belongs may be termed the imaginative world, and the knowledge relating to it, imaginative knowledge. “Imaginative” stands, therefore, in this sense for that which is “actual” in a higher sense than are the facts and beings common to physical sense-perception.

A very ready objection to the use of the symbolic pictures here characterized is that their formation encourages dreamy thoughts, which might arise from a capricious imagination, and might therefore have doubtful consequences. But any such doubts are unjustified in the matter of the symbols given out by the true occult schools. For the symbols are chosen in such a way that they can be looked at quite apart from their connection with outer sense-reality, and their value is to be found only in the power with which they work upon the soul when it turns its attention wholly away from the outer world, when it suppresses all sense-impressions and shuts out every thought to which it might be stimulated from without. The process of meditation is best demonstrated by comparison with sleep. In one aspect it is like the state of sleep; in another, the exact opposite of it. It is a sleep which represents a higher state of being

awake than ordinary waking consciousness. The point is that by concentration on the given conception or image, the soul is obliged to call up much stronger forces out of its own depths than it uses in ordinary life or knowledge. Its inner activity is thereby enhanced. It becomes detached from the body, as it does in sleep; but instead of passing, as in the latter case, into unconsciousness, it experiences a world it did not know before. Although as regards detachment from the body this condition may be compared with sleep, yet it is such that, compared with ordinary waking consciousness, it may be denoted a more intense waking state. By this means the soul learns to know itself in its true, inner, independent being. But in ordinary life, owing to the weaker development of its forces, it is only with the help of the body that the soul arrives at self-consciousness, and it therefore does not learn to know itself but only sees itself in the image,—a kind of reflected image,—traced of it by the body, or, as a matter of fact, by the processes of the body.

Symbols built up in the manner above described are not as yet indicative of anything actual in the spiritual world, but they serve to detach the human soul from sense-observations and from that instrument, the brain, to which the reason is immediately fettered. This detachment is not effected until man is able to feel: "I am now

picturing to myself something by means of powers to which neither my senses nor my brain serve as the instruments"; and the first thing man thus experiences is a sense of freedom from the shackles of the physical organs. He is then able to say to himself: "My consciousness does not vanish when I cease to take cognizance of sense-perceptions and of ordinary reasoned thought: I can lift myself out of those conditions and can then feel myself to be a separate entity alongside of that which I was before"—and this is the *first* of the purely spiritual experiences: the observation of an ego, a being having a soul and spirit nature, which has arisen as a new self from out the one that is fettered to the physical senses and to physical understanding.

Had this detachment from the world of the senses and from the reason been effected without meditation, the person so doing would have lapsed into the nothingness of the unconscious state. This soul and spirit being was our possession prior to meditation also, yet it then lacked the organs for the observation of the spirit-world; and it might, indeed, have been compared to the physical body minus the eye to see—the ear to hear with. The strength thus expended in meditation has, in fact, been the creative means by which these soul and spirit organs have been formed out of a previously unorganized soul and spirit entity. But this which man thus creates for himself is also the first thing to be perceived by him, the

first experience being a kind of self-cognition. It is of the essence of spiritual training that the soul, through the self-education it gives itself at this point of its development, is fully conscious that it at first perceives *itself* in the world of images (imaginations), which appear as a result of the exercises described. It is true that these images make their appearance as a new world, but the soul must recognize that nevertheless they are at first nothing but the reflection of its own being, which has been strengthened by the exercises. And it must not only recognize this by correct reasoning, but must have arrived at such a cultivation of the will that it is able at any time to put away and obliterate the images from the consciousness.

The soul must be able to act in complete independence in the presence of the images. This is part of true spiritual training at this stage. If it could not do this, it would be in the same position, in the sphere of spiritual experiences, as a soul in the physical world which, on looking at an object, has its attention so arrested by it that it cannot look away. An exception to this possibility of obliteration is formed by a group of inner imaginative experiences which are *not* to be extinguished at this stage of spiritual training. They correspond to the inmost kernel of the soul's being, and the occult student recognizes in those images that which forms the basis of his nature

and passes through repeated earthly lives. At this point the knowledge of repeated earthly lives becomes a real experience. In relation to everything else the freedom that has been mentioned must prevail. And only after acquiring the faculty of obliterating experiences is the spiritual outer world really approached. What is obliterated returns in another form, and is experienced as a spiritually outer reality. We experience how, out of something indefinite, we spiritually grow into something definite. And this self-observation has then to proceed onward to a perception of a soul and spirit world without. This comes to pass when we can order our inner experience after the manner to be indicated in the following pages.

At the outset, the soul of the occult student is feeble in all that appertains to a perception of the world of soul and spirit; and he will therefore need all the inner energy he can muster in order, while meditating, to keep a firm hold on the symbols or other pictures that he has so strenuously built up from the suggestions supplied to him by the outer world. Should he, however, desire to attain, further, to a genuine contemplation of the higher world, he will not alone have to maintain his hold on these; he must also, after having done this, be able to continue in a condition in which not only no influences of the outer world of sense can affect the soul, but in which also the imaginary presentments above characterized shall have been effaced

from his consciousness. Then only will that enter the plane of his consciousness that has been previously formed by means of meditation. It becomes, therefore, a matter of importance that there should be an adequate amount of soul-power at the student's disposal, so that that which has been formed may also be spiritually discerned, and may not escape the attention, for this must needs be the case where the inward energies are as yet but feebly developed.

That which is here evolved as an organism of the soul and spirit, and which should be an object of conscious apprehension, is ephemeral and tender, and the disturbing influences of the outer world of sense, however much we may try to exclude them, are nevertheless great. It is not merely a question of those disturbances to which we are able to pay heed, but far more of those which in ordinary life are ever eluding our notice. By reason, however, of man's own nature, a certain condition of transition has in this particular made possible that which the soul in its waking state was powerless to effect, owing to the disturbances of the physical world; this it is, in fact, capable of achieving during sleep. One who gives himself up to serious meditation will, if sufficiently attentive, become aware of a certain aspect wherein his sleep is affected. Such a person will feel that while sleeping he is yet not quite asleep, but that his soul has periods during which it is

active in a certain way during sleep. Under such conditions natural processes have a deterrent effect upon the influences of the external world, which the soul is not strong enough to ward off of itself. When, however, the habit of meditation is beginning to take effect, the soul releases itself during sleep from the conditions of unconsciousness, and realizes that it is in a world of soul and spirit. This can happen in two ways: the person may, while asleep, become aware that he is in another world, or he may, after awakening, remember that he has been in a different world. But to set up the former of these two feelings requires the greater degree of inner energy, for which reason the second is the more common among students in occult training. But it may gradually come to pass that the student will become aware of having been the whole of the time of his sleep in this other world, only emerging therefrom when he wakes. And his memory of beings and facts connected with this other world will become ever more and more distinct, thus showing that in one form or another he has now entered upon the state known to occult science as the continuity of consciousness. (The continuation of consciousness during sleep.)

Still, for this to be so, it is not necessary that man's consciousness should *always* continue during sleep. Much will already have been attained in

the matter of the continuity of consciousness should the person, whose sleep is in general that of the ordinary individual, have certain periods during his sleeping hours when he is aware of being in a world of the soul and the spirit; or if, on awakening, he is able to remember such a condition of consciousness. It should be borne in mind that what is here described is to be understood as only a transition state. It is as well to pass through this state with the aid of training; yet it should not be imagined that any conclusive views in respect to the soul and spirit world are to be gathered during this transition state, for in this condition the soul is uncertain, and unable as yet to rely upon its own experiences. And yet it is through such experiences that the soul ever gathers strength, enabling it during waking hours to ward off the disturbing influences current in the internal as well as in the external physical world, and thus to attain to a state of observation as to the spirit and the soul into which no impression of the senses will intrude,—a condition in which brain-fettered reason is silent, and when even the presentments for meditation, which were but a preparatory means for spiritual vision, will have passed from the consciousness. Whatever is published, in one form or another, through occult science, should never be drawn from any other kind of soul and spirit observation but what is embarked upon in full waking consciousness.

There are two soul experiences which are of importance during the progress of occult training. The first is when the student says to himself: "While disregarding everything the external world may yield me in the way of impressions, I yet, when turning my gaze inward, do not see a being whose activity has been entirely extinguished. On the contrary, I behold one that is self-conscious in a world of which I know nothing, as long as I permit myself to be only impressed by sensations from the outside." And at this moment the soul will have the sensation of having given birth to a new being, this new-born being having quite different qualities from those which were previously in the soul.

The second experience consists in becoming aware of that former self, henceforth detached, as it were, and being at one's side in the guise of a second entity. That within which we had up to this time been imprisoned, evolves now into something we are able to confront; we feel, in fact, at certain times exterior to that which we have been accustomed to regard as our own personality, as our own ego. It is as though one now lived in two egos,—one, that which we have hitherto known; the other, a newly born being, superior to the first,—and we become aware that the former ego acquires a certain independence in its relationship to the second, even as the physical body has a certain

measure of freedom in its relation to that first ego.

Now this is an event of great importance, for by it man comes to know what it is to live in that world which it has been his endeavour to reach by means of training. It is this second, this new-born, ego which can be led to cognizance of the spiritual world, and in it can be developed that which has as much significance for the spiritual world as our sense organs have for the physical world of the senses. Should this development have attained to the requisite degree, the student will not only be aware of himself as a new-born ego, but he will recognize the spiritual facts and entities around him, even as he perceives the physical world through the action of his physical senses; and this is a third important experience.

In order to pass rightly through this stage of spiritual training it must be taken into account that the strengthening of the powers of the soul brings about a degree of self-love and egoism which is quite unknown in the ordinary life of the soul. It would be a mistake for any one to think that it is only a case of ordinary self-love at this point. Self-love becomes so strong at this stage of development that it acquires the strength of a nature-force within the soul, and a vigorous training of the will is necessary in order to conquer this powerful egoism. This training of the will must positively go hand in hand with the rest of

the spiritual training. A strong inclination exists to feel absolutely happy in a world which we have gradually created for ourselves. And we must be able to obliterate, in the manner above described, that to which we have previously devoted ourselves with all our powers. We must efface *ourselves* in the imaginative world we have reached. But this effacement is opposed by the strongest impulses of egoism.

The belief may easily arise that the exercises in spiritual training are something outward, apart from the soul's *moral development*. In this connection it must be said that the moral force necessary for the conquest of egoism, as described, cannot be gained unless the moral condition of the soul is brought to a corresponding stage. Progress in spiritual training is unthinkable unless moral progress comes to pass at the same time. The conquest of egoism is impossible without moral force. Any talk of spiritual training not being at the same time moral training is really out of the question.

Those only who have not experienced such manifestations might advance the following objection, saying, "How can any one know that while *thinking* one is perceiving spiritual manifestations, one is dealing with actualities and not with mere imaginings, visions, or hallucinations?" Now the matter lies thus: every person, who has been systematically trained and who has arrived

at the stage already characterized, will be in a position to note the difference between his own presentment and a spiritual reality, just as well as a man endowed with sound sense knows the difference between the counterfeit of a bar of hot iron and the actual presence of such a bar when he touches it with his hand. The difference is determined by experience and by nothing else; and in the spiritual world, too, life is the touchstone. Just as we know that in the world of the senses the mere representation of a bar of hot iron will burn nobody's fingers, so does the trained occultist know whether he is experiencing a spiritual fact or whether his awakened spiritual organs of perception are under the impress of *actual* facts or entities. The rules which have to be observed by the student in this connection, in order that he should not fall a victim to delusions, will be dealt with in the following pages.

It is of the greatest importance that the student should have attained to a very definite condition of the soul by the time at which the consciousness of the new-born ego commences. For it is due to and by reason of this ego that man is the ruler of his own sensations, feelings, and conceptions; of his impulses, his desires, and his passions. Observations and conceptions cannot be left in the soul to follow their own devices; they must be regulated according to the laws of thought. And it is the ego that, as it were, handles these thought-laws,

and by means of them brings order into the life of conception and thought.

It is similar with regard to desires and passions, inclinations and impulses. The fundamental ethical laws become the guides of these forces of the soul, and by reason of the moral judgment the ego becomes the soul's guide within this domain. Now if a person detaches from his ordinary ego one that is higher, the former becomes to a certain extent independent, so much life-power being taken away from it as must serve for the use of that higher ego. But let us consider the case should that person as yet not have developed a certain ability and firmness in the exercise of the laws of thought and in the power of judgment, and should he, nevertheless, desire to bring about the birth of his higher ego on this insufficient basis. He would then be able to apportion to his ordinary ego only just so much thought capacity as might prior to this have been developed, and should the amount of such systematic thought be too small, then the now independent and ordinary ego will sink to a level of confused and fantastic thought and judgment, and moreover, since in such a case the new-born ego must inevitably also be weak, the disordered lower ego will gain the upper hand, and the person will lose his balance in the matter of discernment, of power of judgment. Had he developed sufficient capability and firmness in thinking logically, he might calmly

have left his ordinary ego to go its own way.

In the ethical sphere this is precisely the same. Should a person not have attained to firmness in the matter of his moral judgment, should he not have become sufficiently master over his inclinations, his impulses, and his passions, he will then render his ordinary ego independent—when he is still in a condition in which he will be overwhelmed by all these powers of the soul. It may then come to pass that that person will have become worse than he was before, owing to the birth of his higher ego. Had he waited to bring about this birth until he had sufficiently developed his ordinary self, attaining firmness in the matter of ethical judgment, stability of character, and thoroughness in the matter of his conscience, he would then have been in a position to have all these virtues left within that first ego when the birth of the second came about. Neglecting to do so, however, lays him open to the danger of losing his moral balance, which under the right course of training cannot happen.

Two things must here be borne in mind. First, that the facts above related should be laid to heart as seriously as possible; and secondly, that, on the other hand, they should not in any way deter persons from entering upon such training.

Any one who has the firm intention of doing all in his power that may give confidence to the first ego in the execution of that which it has to fulfil,

need never be dismayed when the second ego becomes detached as the result of such spiritual training. Yet he must remember that the power of self-delusion may be very great, and may thus lead him into the erroneous belief that he has now reached the stage of "ripeness."

During the spiritual training here described the student develops his thought-life to such an extent that he is not exposed to dangers which are often thought to be connected with training. This cultivation of thought brings about all inner experiences which are necessary, but causes them to be so enacted that the soul lives through them without any injurious shocks. Without an adequate development of thought, these experiences may produce a feeling of great uncertainty in the soul. The method here emphasized calls forth experiences in such a way that they may produce all their effect and yet not cause serious shocks. By developing the life of thought the student becomes more of a *spectator* of the experiences of his inner life, whereas without such thought-development he is in the very midst of the experience and shaken by all the shocks incidental to it.

In systematic training certain qualities are mentioned which the student has to acquire by means of exercises in order to find the way to the higher worlds, and especial stress is laid on the following,— control of the soul over its thoughts,

its will, and its feelings. The manner in which this control is acquired through exercise has a dual aim. On the one hand, the soul is by this practice to acquire a firmness, reliance, and balance, such as will not forsake it even after the birth of the second ego; and on the other hand, this latter ego is to be provided with strength and inner fortitude for its journey.

What is required is that man's thinking power shall in all domains conform to facts. In the physical world of the senses life is the great teacher of the human ego with regard to reality. Were the soul to allow its thoughts to roam aimlessly hither and thither, it would soon be corrected by life, unless it were willing to enter into combat with its mentor: the soul must conform its thoughts to the facts of life. Now, when man leads his thoughts away from the world of the physical senses, he misses the corrective influence of this latter. If his thought is not able to be its own mentor, it will be as unsteady as a will o' the wisp. Consequently, the student's thought must be exercised in such a way that its course and object are self-determined. Inner firmness and capacity to concentrate strictly on one object: this is what such thinking must of itself engender. And for this reason the exercises for meditation should not be concerned with complicated objects, or with such as are foreign to daily life, but should, on the contrary, deal with

such as are simple and familiar. Any one who can succeed in fixing his mind, over a period of several months and for a space of at least five minutes a day, on such ordinary objects as a pin or a lead pencil, excluding for the time being all other thoughts not concerned with the object under contemplation, will have accomplished much in the right direction. (A new article may be chosen each day, or the same one be adhered to for the space of several days.)

Those, also, who feel themselves to be "thinkers" need not despise this method of preparing themselves for occult training, because by the fixing of our attention for a time upon a really familiar object we may be sure that we shall be thinking in accordance with facts, and any one putting to himself the questions: "What are the constituent parts of a pencil?" "How are these materials prepared?" "How are they afterwards put together?" "When were pencils invented?" and so on, will be adapting his conception more to realities than is he who meditates on the descent of man, or asks himself what life is.

Simple themes of meditation prepare us more for an accurate conception of the world of the Saturn, Sun, and Moon stages of development than do those based on learned and complicated ideas, for the primary thing is not merely to think, but to think accurately by means of an inner force. Once one has been trained to accuracy by

means of an obvious, actual physical process, the desire to think in conformity with facts will have become habitual, even when thought is not feeling itself under the control of the physical sense-world and its laws; and we then break free from the tendency to let our thoughts drift about aimlessly.

And even as it governs in the world of thought, so the soul should hold sway in the realm of the will. In the physical sense-world it is life that here too maintains dominion. It urges upon man this or that as a necessity, and the will feels itself constrained to satisfy these same wants. But in following the higher training man must accustom himself to obey his own commands strictly, and whosoever acquires this habit will feel less and less inclined to desire that which is of no moment. All discontent and instability in the life of the will come from the desire for things, of the actuality of which we form no distinct conception. Discontent such as this may, when the higher ego is desirous of leaving the soul, throw that person's whole inner life into disorder; and it is a good exercise to give oneself for the space of several months some command to be carried out at a specified time of day, such as, for instance: "To-day, at this or that particular hour, you will do this or that thing." By such means we arrive in time at "ordering" the time at which the thing is to be done and the manner in which it is to be

performed, so as to admit of its being accomplished with the utmost exactitude. Thus we lift ourselves above the pernicious habit of saying, "I should like this," and "I want the other," the while we exercise no thought toward its accomplishment.

In the second part of *Faust*, Goethe puts the following words into the mouth of a seeress: "Den lieb ich, der Unmögliches begehrt" ("Him I love, who craves the impossible"), and Goethe himself, in his *Prose Proverbs*, says: "In der Idee leben heisst, das Unmögliche behandeln, als wenn es möglich wäre" ("To live in the idea means treating the impossible as though 't were possible").

Yet such sentiments must not be put forward as objections against what has here been stated, for the demands made by Goethe and by his seeress (Manto) can be fulfilled only by those who have first educated themselves up to a desire for that which is possible, and have in so doing arrived at being able, by means of their strong "willing," to treat the impossible in such a manner that through will it becomes transformed into the possible.

Concerning the world of feeling, a certain resignation should pervade the soul of the occult student. And, for this to be so, it is necessary that the soul should have mastery over the expressions of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain. But the very fact of acquiring this characteristic may arouse prejudice: people might be afraid of

becoming dull and unsympathetic if they do not "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Yet this is not the case. What is pleasurable *should* rejoice the soul, and sorrow *should* give it pain, but what the soul is to learn to achieve is conquest over the *signs* of joy and of sorrow. While thus endeavouring, the student will become aware that, so far from becoming "dull and unsympathetic," he will be growing all the more receptive for all the joy and sorrow around him. But it is true that the student will here find that he needs to watch himself carefully for a considerable time to be able to acquire the faculty indicated. He must be careful to see that he partakes of pain and pleasure to the full, yet without so giving himself up to either as to give involuntary expression to it. Justifiable sorrow should not be repressed; but involuntary weeping should be held in check. Revulsion against a bad action is not condemned; but the blind passion of anger is. Nor is precaution against dangers deemed unjustified, though fruitless "being afraid" is to be discountenanced, and so on.

It is only by means of such exercises that the occult student can gain the inner quietude requisite to his soul, in order that at the birth of the higher ego the soul may not find itself as a kind of double leading a second and unhealthy life alongside of the higher self. It is more especially in

these matters that we should not yield to any self-deception. Some people may be of the opinion that they already possess in everyday life a certain degree of equanimity, and that they therefore stand in no need of such exercises; yet it is precisely such who doubly need them. For it is quite possible to remain equable when surveying the things of this life, and then when ascending into the higher world to show evidences of a want of equanimity all the greater because it had only been held in check. For it should be emphatically understood that in the matter of occult training it is not so much a question of what we may previously have seemed to possess, but of persevering in careful and regular practice of what we need. Contradictory as this phrase may appear, it is nevertheless true that though life may have trained us to this or to that, the qualities to serve us in occult training are those that we have to acquire for ourselves. Should life have rendered us excitable, we must train ourselves into vanquishing this trait; yet if life has engendered in us equanimity, we should so rouse ourselves by our own efforts that the soul may be capable of responding to the impressions it receives. The man who cannot laugh at anything has just as little control over his laughter as one who is perpetually giving way to uncontrolled laughter.

Thought and feeling may be cultivated by yet another means, namely, by the acquirement of the

characteristic known as positiveness. There is a beautiful legend told of Christ Jesus, in which it is related how He, with others, passed on the road the dead body of a dog. Our Lord's companions turned aside from the hideous sight, but Christ Jesus referred in admiration to the creature's beautiful teeth. And we can ourselves practise attaining the condition of mind in regard to the world which is thus indicated in the legend. Error, vice, and ugliness should not deter the soul from seeing truth, goodness, and beauty, where-soever they are to be found. Nor is this positiveness to be mistaken for want of judgment, with a deliberate closing of the eyes to what is bad, false, and inferior. He who can admire the beautiful teeth of a decaying animal can also see that decaying corpse—yet the corpse does not hinder his observing the beauty of the teeth. Thus, though what is bad cannot be deemed good, nor error acclaimed as truth, we can yet train ourselves so that what is bad need not prevent us from recognizing what is good, nor need errors render us insensible to that which is true.

Thought, combined with will, attains to a certain maturity if we strive never to allow what we have already experienced or learned to rob us of our unbiassed receptiveness for new experiences. Such a thought as: "I have never heard that before; I don't believe it!" should lose all its significance where the occult student is concerned;

indeed, he should endeavour, for a fixed period of time, to allow every thing and every creature to convey something new to his mind. Every breath of air, every leaf on the tree, the prattling of a child,—each and all will teach us something, provided we be willing to bring a different point of view to bear on it from the one we have held hitherto.

It may, of course, be possible to go too far in this particular, and we must be careful, at one time of life, not to lose sight of the experiences we have had at another time with regard to certain things. Indeed, what we experience in the present should be judged in accordance with the sum of our past experiences. These must be laid on the one scale, while on the other the occult student should place his inclination for ever gathering new knowledge—above all, keeping his mind open to the fact that new experiences may contradict the old.

Thus we have here come to the enumeration of those five qualities of the soul which the occult student should, through definite training, endeavour to make his own: controlling the trend of his thoughts; controlling the impulses of the will; equanimity in the matter of sorrow and joy; positiveness in his judgment of the world; and impartiality in his view of life. After giving consecutive periods of time to the acquiring of these qualities by means of continuous practice, the student must go still further, and see that all these are blended into one harmonious whole

within his soul, to achieve which he will have to practise the exercises in twos and twos together, or three and one, simultaneously, so as to bring about the harmony here desired.

The exercises indicated above are thus given out by the occult teaching because not only do they—if faithfully carried out—produce as a direct result the effects desired, but because they are also calculated indirectly to bring about much that is helpful to the student in pursuing his way to the higher worlds. He who sufficiently practises these exercises will, while so doing, become aware of many a want and many a failing in his own soul-life, and he will at the same time find in them the very means necessary to give strength and security to the intellect, as also to the emotional tendencies and to the character. He will assuredly need many additional exercises, according to his capacities, his temperament, and his character; these, however, will present themselves if the above be abundantly carried out. Indeed, they will eventually reveal themselves as containing more than at the first would appear, as, for instance, when a person endowed with but little self-confidence comes, in the course of time, to find that by persistent practice the needed confidence in himself has come about,—and such may be the case with many another quality of the soul.¹

¹Special exercises going into greater detail on this subject may be found in my book entitled *The Way of Initiation* (Theosophical Publishing Society, 161, New Bond St., London, W.), commencing with Chapter II.

It is a matter of significance that the occult student is capable of raising these capabilities to a higher power; and he must succeed in so controlling his thoughts and feelings that the soul will have power to maintain complete inner quietude for certain periods of time—periods during which the student can keep at a distance from his mind and heart all those things that in any way concern the outer everyday life, its joys and its sorrows, its pleasures and its cares, even its tasks and its claims. At such a time nothing should be allowed entrance to the soul except what the soul itself admits. An objection may easily be made to this; the thought might arise that alienation from life must result if the student withdraws in heart and spirit from life and its duties for a certain part of the day. Yet, in reality, this is by no means the case. For those who, in the above manner, give themselves up to periods of inner quietude and peace will find that out of these there grows such a fund of energy for fulfilling the outer duties of life that they are not only not worse performed, but assuredly better.

It would be well for a man at such times to detach himself entirely from thoughts of his own personal affairs, raising himself to what affects not only himself but mankind generally. If he is then able to fill his soul with messages from another and a spiritual world, and if they have the

power of enthralling his soul to as intense a degree as any personal concern or care, then indeed will his soul have gathered fruit of especial value.

Those who thus exert themselves to regulate their soul-life will even arrive at the possibility of such self-observation as will permit of their reviewing their personal affairs with the same tranquillity as those of others; and seeing one's own experiences and one's own joys and sorrows in the light in which those of another appear, is a good preparation for occult training. Thus in time we may bring this exercise to the requisite pitch that, after the day's work is over, pictures of the day's occurrences will pass before the mind's eye, and we should then perceive ourselves within these experiences; in other words, the student should look at himself in his daily life as an outside observer.

A certain practice in self-observation having been gained by concentrating the attention upon short divisions of one's everyday life, the student will become more and more expert in this kind of retrospect, continued practice enabling him to review these short periods completely and quickly. It will then become ever more and more the ideal of the occult student to assume such an attitude with regard to the events of life that confront him that he will be able to await their approach with absolute calm and inner confidence, no longer judging them by the state of his own soul but

according to their own inner meaning and inner worth. And it is by looking to this ideal that he will create a condition of soul that will enable him to meditate profoundly, as described above, upon symbolical and other thoughts and feelings.

The conditions here described must be fulfilled, because supersensible experience is built upon the foundation on which the student stands in his ordinary soul-life, before he enters the supersensible world. In a twofold way, all supersensible experience is dependent on the soul's point of departure before entering that world. One who is not intent, from the outset, on making sound powers of judgment the foundation of his spiritual training will develop supersensible capacities which perceive the spiritual world inaccurately and untruly. To a certain extent his spiritual organs of perception will develop wrongly. And just as a man with a defective or diseased eye cannot see rightly in the world of sense, so it is not possible to have true perceptions with spirit-organs which are not built up on the foundation of sound powers of judgment. One who starts from an immoral state of soul comes up into spiritual worlds with his spiritual vision confused and clouded. With regard to supersensible worlds he is like one in the sense-world who makes observations in a state of bewilderment. The latter, however, will not arrive at making any statements of consequence, whereas the spiritual observer, even in his

bewilderment, is more awake than a person in the ordinary state of consciousness, and the results of his observations will therefore be errors in regard to the spiritual world.

* * *

The inner value of the grade of imaginative knowledge is secured by the withdrawal of the soul, or meditation, described above, aided by the student accustoming himself to what may be called "sense-free thinking." Now when we formulate an idea based upon observations made in the physical world of the senses our thought cannot fail to be coloured by those senses. Yet it is not as though man could formulate nothing but such ideas: human thought need not become void and meaningless simply because it is not filled with observations derived through the channels of the senses. The most direct and safe way for the occult student to acquire this "sense-free" attitude with regard to his thoughts is by familiarizing himself with those facts concerning the higher worlds which occult science is able to present, making these the subjects of his thoughts.

These facts cannot be observed by means of the physical senses; nevertheless, the student will find that he will be placed in a position to grasp them—if only he has enough patience and perseverance. No one can explore the higher worlds, nor make his own observations therein,

without having been trained. But for all that, it is quite possible without the higher training to understand everything which investigators may be in a position to communicate about those regions. Should any one ask, "How can I accept on trust whatever the occultist may say, being myself as yet unable to see anything?" such an objection would be groundless, for it is perfectly possible to arrive through mere reflective thinking at the sure conviction that the matters thus communicated are true. If a man is unable, after reflecting, to feel this sense of certainty, the want will arise not from lack of power to "believe" in something he cannot see, but simply because he has not as yet applied his powers of reflective thinking in a sufficiently unbiassed, comprehensive, and profound manner.

In order to be clear on this point, it must be borne in mind that human thought, if it bestirs itself energetically, with inner force, can understand more than it usually imagines possible for itself. For in thought there is an inner essence which is in connection with the supersensible world. The soul is not usually conscious of this connection, because it is wont to train its faculty of thought only through the world of sense. On this account it thinks what is imparted to it from the supersensible world incomprehensible. What is thus communicated is, however, not only intelligible to thought which has been

spiritually trained, but to any thinking which is fully conscious of its power and is willing to make use of it.

By the persevering assimilation of what occult teachers are able to impart to us we can habituate ourselves to a line of thought that is not derived from sense-observation, and we then learn to recognize how, within the soul, thought allies itself to thought, and how one thought seeks out another, even when the connection of ideas is not occasioned by any power of sense-observation. The essential point is that by this method we become aware of the fact that the world of thought possesses an inner life, and that while we are engaged in thought we are, indeed, in the realms of a supersensible living power. Thus we may say to ourselves: "There is something within me that constitutes an organism of thought; nevertheless, I am one with this something." Therefore, in the course of yielding to this sense-free way of thinking, we come to the knowledge that there is something real which flows in upon our inner life, just as the attributes of the objects of the senses, when we observe them, flow in upon us through the channels of our physical organs.

An observer in the world of the senses might remark: "Out yonder in space is a rose: it is not unfamiliar to me, for both scent and colour proclaim its presence." And in like manner,

when sense-free thought is working within us, we need only be sufficiently unbiassed in order to be able to say: "Something real proclaims its presence to me, linking thought to thought and constituting a thought-organism"—only that there is this difference to be noted between the communication coming to the observer from the outer world of the senses, and that which actually reaches the sense-free thinker. The former feels that he is standing without—in front of the rose—whereas he who has given himself up to thinking which is untrammelled by the senses will feel *within himself* whatever thus proclaims its presence to him; he will feel himself one with it.

Those who, more or less unconsciously, can accept as real only such things as approach them from the outside, will, it is true, be little able to entertain this feeling, for what is in itself a reality can only be proclaimed to me through my being at one with it. In order to see aright here, it is necessary to have the following inner experience: we must learn to distinguish between the thought combinations we create of our own volition, and those experienced without any voluntary exercise of our will. In the latter case we may then say: "I am entirely tranquil within myself; I am giving rise to no sequence of ideas; I yield to that which thinks within me." And in such a case we are entirely justified in saying, "Within me something is itself a reality," saying so, indeed, with as much

justification as we may say, "The rose makes an impression on me," when we see a particular red and become aware of a particular scent.

Nor is there any contradiction in having derived the content of our ideas from the communications made by the occult seer. The ideas are, it is true, present; we find them there in readiness, if we but yield to them, yet they cannot be "thought" without in each case creating them anew within the soul. This is why the occult teacher seeks to awaken in his hearers and his readers such thoughts as they must first call forth from within themselves, whereas he who describes some object connected with sense realities is alluding to something that the listener or reader may observe within the world of the senses.

(The path which leads to sense-free thinking by means of the communications made by occult science is thoroughly safe. But there is also another method even safer and above all things more exact, yet for this very reason more difficult for the majority. This method is set forth in my two books, *The Theory of Cognition, according to Goethe's Conception of the Universe* and *The Philosophy of Freedom*. These works set forth what human thought may achieve for itself, if, instead of relying on the impressions derived from the external world of the senses, it yields to inward contemplation. At such a time the pure thought works within that person, even as a being lives

within itself. At the same time nothing in either of these writings is derived from communications due to occult science itself. And yet it is here shown that clear, self-concentrated thought can obtain explanations about the world, life, and man.

These writings therefore occupy a very important intermediate position between the cognition of the world of the senses and that of the spiritual world. They proffer those things which thought can win when it raises itself above sense-observation, while yet avoiding the gateway to occult science. Any one allowing these books to work upon his soul in its entirety, already stands within the spiritual world, though the impression he will have will be that of being in the world of thought. And those who feel themselves in a position to seek the influences peculiar to this middle course, will be following a safe and plain road, for they may thus win for themselves feelings concerning those higher worlds, such as will for all time ensure for them the most abundant results.)

* * *

The object of meditating upon the above described symbolical conceptions and feelings is, strictly speaking, the training of the higher organs of cognition within man's astral body. They are in the first place created from the substance of the astral body, and these new organs of observation provide a new world wherein man learns to know himself as a new ego.

These new organs of perception are readily distinguished from those of the physical world of the senses in that they are *active* organs. Whereas the eye and ear are passive, allowing light and sound to work upon them, it may be said of these perceptive organs of the soul and spirit that, while cognizant, they are in a perpetual state of activity, and that they take hold, as it were, of their objects and their facts. This gives rise to the feeling that soul and spirit cognition is a union with—a “dwelling within”—the corresponding facts.

These separately evolving soul and spirit organs may be compared to “lotus flowers” in accordance with the appearance which they present to the clairvoyant consciousness as they are formed from the substance of the astral body.¹

Very special kinds of meditation are used for affecting the astral body in order that this or the other organ of the soul and spirit may form this or that lotus flower, and all systematic meditation undertaken with a view to imaginative cognition has its influence upon one or other of these organs.²

A systematic course of training so arranges and orders the separate exercises to be practised by

¹ It must of course be clearly understood that such an appellation as “lotus flower” has no more bearing on the matter than would the expression “wing,” supposing it were applied to the lobe of a lung. ✓

² In my books, entitled *The Way of Initiation* and *Initiation and its Results*, some of these methods of meditation and exercises for acting upon these different organs are set forth.

the occult student that these organs may either simultaneously or consecutively attain their suitable development, and on this process the student will have to bring much patience and perseverance to bear. Those, indeed, who are possessed of no more than the average amount of patience with which man, under life's present conditions, is endowed, need hardly expect this supply to suffice. For it takes long—often very long indeed—before these organs have reached a point at which the occult student is able to use them for observing things in the higher worlds. At this point comes what is known as “illumination,” in contradistinction to the preparation, or “purification,” which consists in the practices undertaken for the formation of these organs. (The term “purification” is used because the above exercises do in some particulars purify the inner life of the pupil from those things which belong to the world of sense-observation only.)

It may, however, also happen that prior to this actual illumination the student may get repeated “flashes of light” from the other world. Such “flashes” should, indeed, be accepted gratefully, for these can already make him a witness to the spiritual realms. Yet he must not falter should this never be vouchsafed him during his entire period of preparation, and should its consequent duration seem all too long to him. Indeed, such as yield to impatience “because they

can as yet see nothing," have not yet acquired the right attitude toward the higher worlds. Those alone will be in a position to grasp this who can view the exercises they undertake as being an object in themselves. For this practice is in truth a working on something which is of the soul and spirit, namely, on a man's own astral body; and even though not "seeing," we can nevertheless "feel" that we are at work on the spirit and the soul. It is only when we indulge in a preconceived notion as to what we "want to see" that we become unable to experience this feeling. In that case we may, indeed, consider as nothing what is, in reality, of immeasurable importance. Rather should we carefully note everything which we experience while practising,—experiences which are so fundamentally different from those of the external world. We shall then become aware that we cannot work upon our astral body as though it were some indifferent substance; that, on the contrary, an entirely different world here has its being, and one of which we know nothing through the outer world.

Higher entities work upon the astral body in the same way in which the world of the physical senses works upon the physical body, and we "come upon" that higher life in our own astral body, provided only we do not shut ourselves out from it. If we are perpetually saying: "I am aware of nothing," then it is generally the

case that we have made up our mind how these experiences ought to present themselves to our vision, and seeing nothing that accords with these preconceived ideas, we say: "I can see nothing."

He, however, who is able to acquire the right attitude of mind with regard to practice during his training, will find that he gains something more from these exercises, something that he treasures for its own sake,—so much so that he will no longer be able to dispense with so incalculably important a vital function. But he will then know that through these very practices he is standing in the world of soul and spirit, and he will await with patience and resignation those things which may further transpire. The feeling of which the student then becomes conscious may best be expressed in such words as these: "I will do all the exercises which are suitable for me; for I know that during the time thus spent, all things that are of importance to me will come to me; I do not ask for these things impatiently, yet I prepare myself to receive them." And to this no objection can be raised such as, for instance, that the student is first left to feel about in the dark,—possibly for some considerable length of time,—and that he will be able to know that he is on the right path only when the results evince themselves to him. For it is not the fact that these results are the first evidence of the correct method of his practice. Should the attitude

taken in respect to these exercises be the right one, he will feel a sense of satisfaction as the outcome of the exercises, and this will show him clearly that he is on the right road, even before any such results can be recorded.

The right use of exercises in occult training allies itself with a satisfaction that is not mere satisfaction, but knowledge—knowledge, that is to say, which proclaims: “I am doing something which shows me that it is leading me along the right road.” Every occult student may have this knowledge at any moment if he but pay careful attention to all his experiences. Should he not bring this attention to bear, he will pass by such events, just as a man wrapped in thought may walk past the trees growing on either side of a road, without so much as observing them, though he might have seen them had he but looked at them.

It is by no means desirable that results, other than those which are always due to such practice, should in any way be hastened. For this might easily be only an infinitesimal degree of what should really take place. Indeed, in the matter of occult development, partial results are more often than not the cause of considerable delay in complete development. To move about among such forms of the spiritual life as correspond to partial results, tends but to dull the perceptive faculties to the influences of the powers leading

to the higher stages of development; while the value derived from them—that of having seen into the spiritual world—is merely apparent, for this kind of “seeing” cannot yield the truth, but only groundless illusions.

* * *

The organs of the soul and spirit, named “lotus flowers,” shape themselves in such a manner that to clairvoyant consciousness they appear in the vicinity of particular physical organs of the body of the person undergoing training. From among their number I will enumerate the following: in the space between the eyebrows is the so-called two-petalled lotus flower; near the larynx is located the sixteen-petalled one; about the neighbourhood of the heart we find the twelve-petalled lotus flower. The fourth is near the navel, and there are others appearing in close conjunction to other parts of the physical body.¹

The lotus flowers are formed out of the astral body, and by the time one or the other has developed, we ourselves shall have come to know that we are in possession of it. We then feel that we can make use of it, and that by so doing we really enter a higher world. The impressions received of that world will still resemble in many respects those of the physical senses; and any one with imaginative cognizance will be able to allude to

¹The appellation “two-petalled” or “sixteen-petalled,” and so on, is used because the organs in question may be likened to flowers having a corresponding number of petals.

the sensations emanating from this new and higher world in such terms as "feelings of warmth or of cold"—"sounds, or word-impressions"—"effects of light or of colour"—for it is as such that he becomes aware of them. Yet he will be conscious of the fact that these impressions received in the imaginative world express something different from what they do in the actual world of the senses; and he recognizes that there are causes behind them which have nothing to do with physical matter, but are connected with things which are of the soul and spirit.

Should he receive an impression of heat he will not, for instance, attribute this to a piece of hot iron, but will regard it as the emanation of some soul-process, such as he has hitherto experienced only within his soul's inner life. He knows that behind the imaginative experiences things and processes have their being which are of the soul and spirit, even as at the back of physical perceptions we have physical entities and material facts.

And yet this similarity apparent between the world of the imagination and the physical world is modified by one important difference. There is something present in the physical world which, when met with in the imaginative world, bears quite another appearance. In the former we are aware of a perpetual ebb and flow, an alternation between birth and death. But in the imaginative world there appears, in place of this phenomenon,

a continual metamorphosis of the one into the other. In the physical world we see, for instance, how a plant fades away, but in the imaginative world there emerges, in proportion as the plant fades, the shape of another form, not physically discernible, into which the withering plant changes. When once the plant has vanished, this form will have become fully developed in its place. Birth and death are conceptions which lose their value in the imaginative world, making way for a comprehension of the transmutation of the one into the other.

This being the case, those truths concerning which we have already made certain communications in an earlier chapter of this book (see Chapter II, "The Nature of Man") become accessible to the imaginative conception. Physical sense-cognizance is, on the other hand, able to perceive only what takes place in the physical body, processes which are enacted within the "domain of birth and death." The other principles of man's nature, namely, the etheric or vital body, the sentient body, and the ego, are subject to the law of transmutation, and the perception of them is unlocked by the imaginative understanding. Any one who has attained thus far will observe that that which lives on under other conditions of being, appears to detach itself, as it were, from the physical body by the process of dying.

But development does not here come to a standstill within the imaginative world. Any one who attempted to remain stationary in it would, it is true, be able to note the entities in process of transmutation, but he would be unable to interpret the meaning of these processes of change. He would not be in a position to find his way about in this newly attained world. For the imaginative world is a realm of unrest—there is naught in it but movement and change; no quiet spot is to be found there. A resting place is reached only by the person who, having transcended the stage of imaginative knowledge, has attained to that grade of development known to occult science as “understanding through inspiration.”

It is not necessary for him who seeks knowledge of the superphysical world so to develop his capacities that the imaginative understanding should have been acquired in full measure, before moving on to the stage of “inspiration.” His exercises may, indeed, be so regulated that two processes may go on simultaneously, one leading to imagination and the other to inspiration. The student will then in due time enter a higher world, in which he not only perceives, but where he can also find his way about, as it were, and which he becomes able to interpret. Progress is, it is true, generally distinguished by the student having some phenomena of the imaginative world

presented to him, and then, after a little while, he will have the sensation that he is now beginning to know his whereabouts.

Yet the world of inspiration is something quite new as compared with that of mere imagination. By means of the latter we learn to know the transformation of one event into another; while through the former (inspiration) we come to recognize the inner qualities of the changing entities. Imagination shows us the soul-expression of such entities; inspiration penetrates inward, even to their spiritual core. Above all, we become aware of a multiplicity of spiritual entities and of their relations one to the other. In the physical sense-world we have also, of course, to deal with a multiplicity of divers entities, yet in the world of inspiration this multiplicity bears a different character. There the relation of each entity to the other is of a definite nature, not, as in the physical world of the senses, determined by exterior impressions upon the entity, but arising out of its inner nature.

When we become aware of an entity in the world of inspiration, no external impression made upon anything is apparent, such as might be likened to the influence of one physical being upon another; a relation nevertheless exists which is purely the result of the inner constitution of the two entities. This relationship may be compared to that in which the separate sounds or letters of

a word stand one to the other in the physical world. If the word "man" comes before us the impression made is due to a unison of the sounds "m-a-n"; no impact, nor any other influence, proceeds from the "m" to the "a," but both sounds work together, doing so within "a whole," owing to their inner constitution. For this reason, observations made in the world of inspiration can only be compared to reading. The entities in this world make the impression on the beholder of written characters which he has to learn, and the connection between which is revealed to him as though in supersensible writing. This is why occult science calls the knowledge derived from inspiration the "reading of the secret writing."

The way in which things are read by this secret writing, and how that which has been read can be communicated, shall now be made clear by a reference to previous chapters of this book. There man's being was at first described as it is built up of different principles. It was then further shown how the world-being upon which man is developing passes through various conditions, those of Saturn, Sun, Moon, and earth. The perception by means of which we are able on the one hand to discern the principles of the human entity, and, on the other hand, the successive states of the earth and its previous transformations, is revealed to the imaginative understanding. But it is now further requisite to comprehend

the relations existing between the Saturn state and man's physical body; between the Sun state and the etheric body, and so on. What must be explained is that even during the Saturn state the germ of man's physical body came into existence, and that it has then further developed up to its present form during the Sun, Moon, and earth periods.

It had to be shown what changes took place in the human entity owing to the sun separating from the earth, and also that something similar again took place in connection with the moon. We had, moreover, to make plain what contributed to the bringing about of such changes with regard to mankind as those which took place in the Atlantean era, how they were expressed in the subsequent Indian, ancient Persian, Egyptian, and other periods. The description of this sequence of events is not the result of the imaginative perception, but of inspirational knowledge derived from the reading of the secret writing. For such reading the imaginative perceptions are as the letters, or sounds, although such reading is not alone necessary for interpretations like the above. It would be impossible to comprehend the whole life-process of man by means of the imaginative understanding. One might possibly be in a position to note how, in the process of dying, the psychic and spiritual principles dissociate themselves from what remains

in the physical world, but it would be impossible to understand the connection between what happens to man after death and the preceding and following stages, were we unable to find our way through the facts obtained by imaginative cognition. Without inspirational knowledge the entire imaginative world would remain mere writing, at which we might stare but which we should be unable to read.

As the student proceeds from imagination to inspiration he will soon see how wrong it would be to neglect this knowledge of the great world-conditions and limit himself merely to those facts which, to a certain degree, touch our closer personal interests. Indeed, such as are not initiated into these matters may be inclined to say: "The only thing that seems of any importance to me is that I should ascertain the fate of the human soul after death. If any one can give me information upon that subject, it will suffice; but of what use is it for occult science to involve me in such remote subjects as the Saturn and the Sun states, or the separation of the moon and the sun, and so on?"

Those, however, who have been properly instructed in these things will recognize that a true understanding of what they desire to learn could not be obtained without prior knowledge as to these matters, which appear so unnecessary to them. A delineation of man's states after

death would remain utterly incomprehensible and valueless to the man who is unable to connect it with ideas derived from those very far-off events. Even the most elementary observations made by a clairvoyant person necessitate his acquaintance with such things.

When, for example, a plant passes from blossom into the state of fruition, the clairvoyant can note a change going forward in an astral entity which, while the plant is in bloom, has hovered above and around it in the semblance of a cloud. Had the fructification not taken place, this astral entity would have been changed into quite a different form from the one it now assumes in consequence of this fertilization. But now we may understand the entire process thus clairvoyantly observed if we have but learned to comprehend our own nature from that great cosmic process, in which the earth and all its inhabitants were involved at the time of the separation from the sun. Prior to its fertilization the plant is in a similar condition to that of the whole earth before that separation from the sun took place, and after fertilization the blossom shows itself in such wise as recalls the state of the earth when the sun had passed out and when the moon powers were still bound up with it.

Those who have thoroughly assimilated the idea to be gained by a comprehension of this separation from the sun, will now be able to

grasp adequately the significance of the process of plant fertilization, when it is said that "the plant previous to fructification is in a 'sun state,' and after this in the 'moon state.' " Indeed, it may be said of even the smallest occurrence in the world that it can be fully understood only when the reflection of the great cosmic events is recognized in it. Unless this be the case, such an occurrence must remain as incomprehensible as to its real nature as would be Raphael's Sistine Madonna, were it so covered up that but one little speck of blue was visible.

Everything that happens to man is a reflection of all those great cosmic events that have to do with his existence. Those who wish to understand the observations made by clairvoyant consciousness of the phenomena taking place between birth and death, and again between death and a new birth, will be able to do so if they first acquire the faculty of interpreting imaginative observations by means of the conceptions they have gained by reflecting upon the great cosmic events. These surveys, indeed, furnish the key to a comprehension of human life. Therefore the studies of Saturn, Sun, and Moon are, from the standpoint of occult science, at the same time studies of man.

Through inspiration a knowledge is attained of the relationships between the beings of the higher world, and at a further stage of cognition

it becomes possible to obtain knowledge of the inner being of these entities. This grade, or step, of the understanding is known to occult science as that of intuitive knowledge.¹

¶ Cognition of a sense-being implies standing outside it, and judging it according to the outward impression. • Intuitive cognition of a spiritual entity implies being at one with it; uniting oneself with the inner being of that entity. Step by step, the occult student ascends toward such knowledge. Imagination has led him no longer to sense the impressions he receives as being the external qualities of entities, but rather as effluences of the soul and spirit. Inspiration leads him further, to the interior of these entities, and by it he learns what these beings are to each other; by means of intuition he penetrates within the entities themselves.

Here we can again illustrate by means of foregoing chapters what is the meaning of intuition. In those earlier chapters it has not only been stated how the progress of the Saturn, Sun, and Moon evolutions proceeded; but also that beings took part in widely different ways in those developments, and mention was made of the Thrones, or

¹ Intuition is in everyday life a much-abused word, which is made to stand for a vague and uncertain view of a matter; for some sort of "notion," which, while it may possibly "hit" the truth, can nevertheless give no immediate proof of it. It is needless to say that this kind of intuition is not meant here. Intuition, in this case, stands for knowledge of the highest and most luminous clearness, of the justification of which the possessor is, in the fullest sense, conscious.

Lords of Will, the Lords of Wisdom, the Lords of Motion, and so on. In connection with the earth's development, reference was made to the Lucifer spirits and spirits of Ahriman. The structure of the world was traced back to those beings who took part in it. The knowledge attainable as to these beings is derived from intuitive cognition, and such knowledge becomes imperative, if we wish to understand the course of man's life.

That which is released from the human physical body at death passes on through divers states in the future. The more immediate conditions after death might, to some extent, be described by referring to imaginative knowledge, but that which takes place when man has proceeded farther into that time lying between death and a new birth would be entirely incomprehensible to the imagination, did not inspiration come to its aid. For inspiration alone can disclose what can be revealed about man's life after its purification in the "land of spirits." There, however, something occurs for which inspiration in its turn proves inadequate, and as to which it has to some extent lost the clue. For there is a period in human development, between death and a new birth, in which the human entity is accessible to intuition only.

Yet this part of the human entity is ever within man, and would we understand it in its

true inwardness we must also seek it, by means of intuition, in the time between birth and death. Any one attempting to fathom man by means of imagination and inspiration alone would be missing that which happens to the very innermost being, that which continues from incarnation to incarnation. It is therefore by intuitive cognition alone that adequate research concerning reincarnation and Karma becomes possible, and all genuine knowledge as to these processes is derived from research undertaken by means of intuition. If a man would know his own inner self, he can do so only by intuition: by its aid he becomes aware of what it is that moves onward within him from incarnation to incarnation; and should it fall to any one's lot to know something about his earlier incarnations, this can take place only through intuitive knowledge.

* * *

Knowledge through inspiration and intuition is attainable only by means of exercises of the soul and spirit, and they resemble those meditations practised for the attainment of the imaginative faculty which have already been described. While, however, in exercises for the development of the imagination, a connection is set up with impressions belonging to the world of the physical senses, such links must gradually be set aside in the case of inspiration. In order to obtain a clear conception of what has to happen here, it

would be well to recall to mind the symbol of the "rosy cross." When we meditate on this we have before us a picture of which the component parts have been taken from the world of the senses: there is the black colour of the cross, and the roses; and yet the combination of those various parts into the "rosy cross" is not derived from the world of the senses. If the student now endeavours to banish from his consciousness both the black cross and the red roses, in their capacities of sense-realities, only retaining in his soul that spiritual energy which has been active in putting the above things together, he will be in possession of a means for such meditation as will gradually lead him on to inspiration. He should put the question to himself somewhat in the following manner: "What have I inwardly done in order to construct that symbol of the cross and the roses? Well, what I did, being an act of my own soul, I will retain my hold upon; but the picture itself I will allow to fade away out of my consciousness. I shall then be able to feel within me all that my soul did in order to produce the picture, though I no longer recall the picture itself. I will now live wholly within: I will live in my own activity that created the picture. I will not meditate upon a picture, but upon the powers of my own soul which are capable of creating pictures."

Such are the meditations that must now be undertaken in respect to many symbols. This

leads to cognition through inspiration. Here is another example, that of meditating upon the growth and subsequent withering of a plant. The picture of a gradually growing plant is allowed to appear before the soul, how it grows up from the seed and, unfolding leaf after leaf, reaches the flowering stage and afterwards that of bearing fruit. Then let your meditation be of its decline, on to its complete withering away, its dissolution. By the help of meditations on such a symbol as this the student gradually attains to a feeling concerning growth and decay of which the plant is but a symbol. If the exercises be persevered in continuously, there can be evolved from this feeling the image of the transformation which underlies physical growth and decay.

But if one would attain the corresponding stage in inspiration, this exercise has to be practised differently. Here one's own activity of soul must be called to mind,—that which had obtained from the image of the plant the conception of growth and decay. The plant must now be allowed to vanish altogether from the consciousness, and the attention be concentrated entirely upon the student's own inner activity. It is only such exercises as these that help us to rise to inspiration. But in the beginning the student will not find it an easy matter to understand fully how to set about such an exercise, owing to the fact that people are accustomed to allow their

inner life to be determined by external impressions, hence a tendency to uncertainty --a general wavering—when it comes to unfolding a soul-life that has freed itself of all exterior impressions.

Here the student must clearly understand that he should only undertake these exercises if along with them he cultivates everything that may lead to firmness and certainty in his judgment, his emotional life, and his character; these precautions are even more necessary than when seeking to acquire the faculty of imagination. Should he take them, he will be doubly successful, for, in the first place, he will not lose the balance of his personality through the exercises; and secondly, he will acquire the capacity of being really able to carry out what is demanded in these exercises. They will be deemed difficult only so long as the student is at fault in the matter of the particular attitude of soul, and the precise feelings and sentiments requisite to their complete performance, while he who patiently and perseveringly cultivates within his soul such qualities as are favourable to the growth of supersensual knowledge will not be long in acquiring both the understanding and the faculty for these practices.

Any one who can acquire the habit of frequently entering into the quiet of his own soul, and who, instead of worrying about himself, utilizes such time for the transforming and ordering of those experiences he has had in life, will gain much.

For he will perceive that thoughts and feelings become the richer by bringing life's experiences into connection with each other. He will become aware that he gains stores of new knowledge not only through new impressions and new experiences, but also by letting the old be digested within him.

He who is able to set to work and to ponder the value of his experiences,—nay, even the opinions he may have formed,—doing so in such a manner as to exclude himself, together with his sympathies and antipathies, his personal interests, and his feelings, will indeed be doing much to prepare the ground for knowledge of the supersensual kind, and he will in very truth be cultivating what may be called a rich inner life. But what is of primary importance is the balance and the equilibrium of the qualities of the soul. People are only too apt, when indulging in certain activities of the soul, to become one-sided. Thus, when a person has come to know the advantages of contemplation, and of dwelling upon pictures derived from his own thought-world, he is apt to develop a tendency to withdraw himself from the impressions of the outer world. Yet such a step only leads to a parching and withering of the inner life; and he will go farthest who manages to retain an unchecked receptivity for all impressions of the outer world, while yet possessing the power to withdraw within his own inner self. It is by no

means necessary to think of the so-called important events of life only: every one, in every sphere of life, be his four walls ever so humble, will be possessed of experience enough, provided only his mind be truly receptive. Experiences need not be sought—they abound on every hand.

Here it is of particular importance to consider how experience may be utilized by the human soul. For instance, one may make the discovery that some one he or another greatly reveres has some quality that cannot but be regarded as a flaw in his character. An experience of this kind may lead the person to whom it comes to thoughts which will tend in one of two different directions. He may simply feel that he can never again regard the person in question with the same degree of veneration; or again, on the other hand, he may say to himself: "How has it been possible for this revered person to become burdened with such a failing? How can I present the matter to my mind so as to see in this failing not a mere fault, but rather a something that is the outcome of his life, possibly even caused by his grander qualities?" Whoever can place the question thus before his own mind may, perhaps, arrive at the conclusion that his veneration for his friend need not suffer the least diminution, owing to the failing that has come to light.

Experiences of this nature will, each time they are met with, add something to our understanding

of life. Yet it would certainly be a bad thing for any one to allow himself, by reason of the value of this view of life, to excuse everything in those whom he happens to like, or to drop into the habit of ignoring every blamable action, in order to seek in it some benefit to his own inner development. For this latter does not take place if the impetus, not only to blame faults but to understand them, comes from ourselves. Advantage of the kind instanced can only accrue when our attitude has been brought about by the case itself, and it is immaterial whether the person passing judgment thereon has anything to gain or to lose. It is incontestably true that we cannot learn by condemning a fault, but only by understanding it; but, at the same time, if, owing to understanding it, we exclude all disapproval of it, we cannot get very far, either.

Here, again, the matter does not depend so much upon one-sidedness, either in one direction or the other, but rather on the proportion and balance of all qualities in the soul; and this is very specially the case with one of these qualities which is preëminently important to man's development: this is the feeling of devotion. Those who can cultivate this feeling, or on whom nature has herself bestowed so inestimable a gift, have a good foundation for the powers of supersensible knowledge. Those who in childhood and youth have been able to look up to certain persons with

feelings of devoted admiration, beholding in them some high ideal, will already possess in the depths of their souls the soil in which supersensible knowledge may flourish abundantly. And those who, possessed of the maturer judgment of later life, can direct their gaze upon the starry heavens and surrender themselves unreservedly to revelations of the Higher Powers, are in a like manner ripening their senses for the acquisition of knowledge with regard to the supersensible worlds. So is it also with those who can admire the powers ruling over human life itself. It is of no small significance for a man who has attained maturity to be able to feel himself filled with reverence, even of the most exalted kind, for others in whom he either believes there are, or thinks he recognizes, superlative qualities. For it is only where veneration such as this is present that a vista of the higher worlds can be revealed. Those who possess no sense of reverence will never go very far in their attainment of cognition; for from such as decline to appreciate anything in this world, the essence of all things will assuredly be withheld.

Nevertheless, any one permitting his feelings of reverence and devotion to slay his healthy self-consciousness and self-confidence is guilty of sinning against the laws of balance and equilibrium. Thus the occult student must see that he labours perpetually to mature his own nature; then, indeed, he may rightly acquire confidence in his

own personality, and believe that its powers are increasing more and more. Any one arriving at the right conclusion in this respect may then say to himself: "There are within me hidden powers, and I am able to call them forth from within. If, therefore, I see something which fills me with reverence because it is above me, I need no longer merely venerate it, but I may confidently assume that, if I but develop all that is in me, I may raise myself to the level of the object of my veneration."

The more capable a man is of fixing his attention upon those events of life which do not primarily demand any measure of personal criticism, the greater will be the possibility of providing himself with a foundation for growth in higher worlds. The following example will make this evident. Let us assume that some one is placed in a position in which it rests with him either to do, or leave undone, a certain thing. His judgment bids him "Do this," while yet there may at the same time be a certain indefinable something in his feelings which deters him from the deed. It may so happen that the person in question will pay no heed to this inexplicable something, carrying out the action in accordance with his judgment. But it may also be that the person so placed will hearken to this inner suasion and not perform the action. Now, pursuing the matter further, he may find that mischief would have

resulted from his following the dictates of his reason, and that a blessing awaited his omission of the act. Any experience of this nature may lead a man's thoughts into quite a definite channel, when he will put the matter to himself thus: "There is something within me that is a surer" guide than is that measure of judgment of which I am at present possessed: I must therefore retain an open mind in respect to this inner something, to the height of which my own capacity for judgment has not yet attained."

The soul derives much benefit from the attention being directed to occurrences in life such as these, for they demonstrate that man's healthy premonitions bear something in them which is of greater moment than he, with his present degree of judgment, is able to perceive. Attention in this direction has the effect of enlarging the life of the soul. Yet here again certain peculiarities may arise which are of themselves dangerous. Any one who accustoms himself to a perpetual sifting of his judgment, owing to this or that "premonition," might well become a shuttle-cock tossing at the mercy of every kind of undefined impulse; indeed, it is not a far cry from such habitual indecision to a state of absolute superstition.

Every superstition is disastrous to the student of occult science. The possibility of gaining admission by legitimate means to the realms of

spiritual life must depend upon a careful exclusion of all superstition, phantasy, and dreaming. He who is pleased at having had a certain experience which cannot be grasped by human reason will not approach the spiritual world in the right manner: No partiality for the "inexplicable" will ever make an occult student. So much is certain, and people must entirely divest themselves of the idea that a mystic is one who presupposes the inexplicable and the unfathomable whenever, and wherever, in this world he thinks fit. The right feeling that should inspire the student of occult science is the recognition everywhere of hidden forces and hidden beings, and also a feeling that the hitherto unfathomed forces are capable of being understood whenever the right powers become available.

There is a peculiar disposition of mind which at every step of his development is of great importance to the occult student. This consists in not assuming, in his search after truth, an attitude such as renders him particularly anxious as to the way in which this or that question can be answered. He should rather concentrate his energies upon trying how he may best develop this or that faculty within him, and when, by means of such patient inward labour, various faculties have been attained, he will find that the answer to certain questions will be forthcoming.

This is the attitude of soul which the occult student should ever cultivate, for by its aid he is

led to work upon himself, to bring his nature to greater maturity, and to be able to resist the impulse to force an answer to certain questions. He will wait, until in the fulness of time the answers come to him. Yet here, once more, those who tend to become one-sided can achieve little, and the occult student may rest assured that within a certain time he will be in a position to solve even the greatest problems in accordance with the measure of his powers: here also balance and equipoise of the soul play a significant part.

Many another quality of the soul might be discussed, the fostering and development of which are desirable, should the student wish to pursue the exercises requisite to inspiration; but in everything it should be emphasized that harmony and balance are the main points; both prepare the understanding and the capacity for the exercises here described—exercises for the attainment of inspiration.

Exercises for the attainment of intuition require that the student should not only banish from his consciousness the pictures whereby he gained the powers of imagination, but also the life in that activity of his own soul into which he plunged for the attainment of inspiration. He is—and this should be taken literally—to retain in his soul nothing he has hitherto known, either by inner or outer experience. But if, after this throwing off of both inner and outer experiences, nothing should remain within his consciousness,—

that is to say, should his consciousness disappear altogether and should he drift into unconsciousness,—he would then be able to recognize his unfitness to undertake as yet the exercises leading up to intuition, and he should therefore continue those requisite for imagination and inspiration.

A time is bound to come when his consciousness will no longer be a void after rejecting those inner and outer experiences,—when, on the contrary, such rejection will still leave a certain residue to which the student can then devote himself in inner meditation, just as on previous occasions he has given himself up to what owes its existence to inner and outer impressions. This something is, however, of a very special nature, for in comparison with all previous experiences it will be found to be something absolutely new. When it occurs, we recognize it as being something we have never known before. It is a perception, even as an actual sound is, that strikes upon the ear; yet it can enter our consciousness only by way of our intuition, just as the sound can come within the range of our consciousness only by way of the ear. And thus with intuition the last remnants of the physical and sentient are stripped from man's impressions, while the spiritual world begins to expand before the understanding in a form that has nothing in common with the characteristics of the world of the physical senses.

Imaginative cognition is attained by the evolving of the lotus flowers from the astral body. Owing to the exercises undertaken for the attainment of inspiration and intuition, particular movements, formations and tendencies which were previously absent, now appear in the human etheric or vital body. These are the organs by means of which man learns to read the secret writing, and takes up into the sphere of his faculties what lies beyond that writing. For such as are clairvoyant, the changes which occur in the etheric body of a person attaining to inspiration and intuition are displayed in the following manner. Near the physical heart is situated a new centre which develops into an etheric organ. From this organ, movements and currents flow toward the different parts of the human body, doing so in the most varied manner. The most important of these movements approach the lotus flowers, traversing these as well as their separate petals, and thence directing their course outward to where they radiate their light out into exterior space. The more developed a person is, the greater will be the circumference around him wherein these rays will become discernible. This centre near the heart is not, however, the one which under correct training first tends to evolve. It has first to be prepared, and there is to be first formed a provisional centre in the head, which later moves downward to the region of the

larynx, whence it is finally transferred into the neighbourhood of the heart. Under an irregular course of development it would be possible for the organ in question to develop near the heart in the first place, in which case there would be a danger that the student thus trained, instead of arriving in due course at adequate, tranquil clairvoyance by regular means, would turn into a visionary dreamer.

Subsequent development enables the occult student to render these currents and organized parts of his etheric body independent of his physical body; he then becomes capable of using them separately, and the lotus flowers then serve him as instruments for setting in motion his etheric body. Yet, before this can take place, certain currents and radiations must come into action around his entire etheric body, surrounding this, as it were, with a fine network, and thus encasing it as though it were a separate entity. When this has taken place, the movements and currents within the etheric body are able to put themselves in touch with the world of soul and spirit outside them, uniting themselves with that world in such a manner that affairs of the soul and spirit transpiring externally combine and mingle with the inward world, with that of the etheric body. When this comes to pass, the moment has arrived when man can consciously observe the world of inspiration. This cognizance takes place in a

manner somewhat different from cognizance of the physical-sense world. In this latter we become aware of the world by means of our senses, and gather from these perceptions our ideas, opinions, and conceptions. But in the case of knowledge through inspiration this is not so.

What is thus recognized is immediately present to the mind; there is no thinking after the perception has taken place. What in the case of physical-sense cognition is only gained through an idea and subsequently translated into terms, is, in the case of inspiration, simultaneous with perception. One would therefore be running the risk of becoming merged with the surrounding world of soul and spirit, and being unable to differentiate oneself from it, had not the fine network above alluded to been previously formed in the etheric body.

When exercises for the attainment of intuition are practised, they not only affect the etheric body but extend their influence to the supersensible forces of the physical body. But it must not of course be imagined that effects are brought about in the physical body which are discernible to ordinary sense-observation, for the effects are such as the clairvoyant alone is able to estimate, and they have nothing to do with any external powers of perception. They come as the result of a ripened consciousness, when this latter is able to have intuitional experiences, even though

it has divested itself of all previous inner and outer experiences. The experiences of intuition are, however, subtle and delicate, and are of so intimate a nature that the physical human body at its present stage of development is coarse in comparison with them, and therefore proves a determined hindrance to the success of any exercises for attaining intuition. Nevertheless, should these be pursued with energy and perseverance, and with the requisite inward calm, they will ultimately overcome those powerful hindrances of the physical body. The occult student will become aware of this when he notices how, by degrees, particular actions of his physical body which hitherto had taken place without his own volition, now come under his control. He will also become aware that for a short time he will feel the need, for instance, of so regulating his breathing (or some similar act) as to bring it into a kind of harmonious accord with whatever is being enacted within his soul, be it exercises or other forms of inner concentration.

The ideal development would be for no exercises to be carried out by means of the physical body but rather that everything which has to take place within it should result only as a consequence of exercises for intuition. As, however, the physical body offers such powerful impediments, the training may permit of some alleviations. These consist in exercises which affect the

physical body; yet everything in this domain that has not been directly imparted by the teacher, or those having knowledge and experience of these things, is fraught with danger. Such exercises, for instance, include a certain regulated process of breathing to be carried out for a very short space of time. These regulations as to breathing correspond in quite a definite way to particular laws of the world of the soul and spirit. Breathing is a physical process, and when this act is so carried out as to be the expression of a law of the soul and spirit, physical existence receives the direct stamp, as it were, of spirituality, and the sense-material is transformed.

For this reason occult science is able to call the change due to such spiritual influence a direct transmutation of the physical, and this process represents what is called "working with the philosopher's stone" by those who have knowledge of these matters. And here it is important that all the superstitions, the humbug, and the charlatanism that have during the course of time accumulated about this formula should be put aside; the meaning of the process will be all the more significant to one who understands it, for the very reason that, as an occult student, all superstition is far removed from him. When we have gained a clear idea about a matter of importance it is presumably permissible to call that idea by its right name, even though error and nonsense

should have become associated with that name through misunderstandings and far worse things.

Every true intuition is a "working with the philosopher's stone," since every such act calls directly upon powers which are derived from the supersensible world, and are brought to bear upon the world of sense.

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As the occult student climbs the path leading to cognition of the higher worlds, he becomes aware at a particular point that the cohesion of the powers of his own personality is assuming a different form from that which it possesses in the world of the physical senses. In the latter, the ego brings about a uniform coöperation of the powers of the soul—primarily of thought, feeling, and will. These three soul powers are actually, under normal conditions of human life, in perpetual relation one to the other. For instance, we see a particular object in the external world, and it pleases or is displeasing to the soul; that is to say, the presentment of the thing will be followed by a sense of either pleasure or aversion. Possibly we may desire the object, or may have the impulse to alter it in some way or other; that is to say, desire and will associate themselves with both presentment and feeling. Now this association is due to the fact that the ego coördinates presentment (thinking), feeling, and willing, and after this fashion introduces order among the

powers of personality. This healthy arrangement would be interrupted should the ego prove itself powerless in this respect: if, for instance, the desires went a different way from the feelings, or the presentments. No man would be in a healthy condition of mind who, while thinking this or that to be right, nevertheless wished to do something which he did not consider right. The same would hold good should a person desire not the thing that pleased him but that which displeased him. Now the person progressing toward higher cognition becomes aware that feeling, thinking, and willing do actually assume a certain independence; that, for example, a particular thought no longer urges him, as though of itself, to a certain condition of feeling and willing. The matter resolves itself thus: We may perceive something correctly by means of thinking, yet in order to arrive at a feeling or resolution on the subject we may need a further independent impetus, coming from within. Thinking, feeling, and willing no longer remain three powers, radiating from the ego as their common centre, but become, as it were, independent entities, just as if they were three separate personalities. For this reason, therefore, a person's own ego must be strengthened, for not only must it introduce order among three powers, but the leadership and guidance of three entities have devolved upon it.

And this is what is known to occult science as

the cleavage of the personality. Here is once more clearly revealed how important it is to add to the exercises of the higher training others for giving certainty and firmness to the judgment, and to the life of feeling and will. For if certainty and firmness are not brought into the higher world, it will at once be seen how weak the ego proves to be, and how it can be no fitting ruler over the powers of thought, feeling, and will. In the presence of this weakness, the soul would be dragged by three different personalities in as many directions, and its inner privacy would cease. But should the development of the occult student proceed on the right lines, this multiplication of himself, so to speak, will prove to be a real step forward, and he will nevertheless continue, as a new ego, to be the strong ruler over the independent entities which now make up his soul.

In the subsequent course of development this division or cleavage is carried further; thought, now functioning independently, arouses the activities of a fourth distinct entity of the soul and spirit; one that may be described as a direct influx into the individual of currents which bear a resemblance to thoughts. The entire world then appears as a thought-structure, confronting a man just as do the vegetable and animal worlds in the domain of the physical senses. In the same manner do feeling and will, which have become independent, stimulate two powers within

the soul to work in it as separate entities. And yet a seventh power and entity must be added, which resembles the ego itself. Thus does man, on reaching a particular stage of development, find himself to be composed of seven entities, all of which he has to guide and control.

The whole of this experience becomes associated with a further one. Before entering the supersensible world, thinking, feeling, and willing were known to man merely as inner soul-experiences. But as soon as he stands within that supersensible world he becomes aware of things which express nothing of the nature of the physical world, but such as belong to the soul and spirit. Behind the characteristics of the new world of which he has become aware, he now perceives spiritual entities. These present themselves to him as an external world, as things in the domain of the physical senses, as stones, plants, and animals have been wont to present themselves to his senses. Now the occult student is able to observe an important difference between the spiritual world unfolding itself before him and the world he has hitherto been accustomed to recognize by means of his physical senses. A plant of the sense-world remains what it is, whatever man's soul may think or feel about it. This is not the case at first with regard to images of the soul and spirit world, for these change according to man's own thoughts and feelings. Man

stamps upon them an impression which is the result of his own being.

Let us imagine a particular picture presenting itself to man in the imaginative world. As long as he maintains indifference toward it, it will continue to show a particular form. As soon, however, as he is moved by feelings of like or dislike with regard to it, its form will change. Pictures, therefore, at first present not only something independent and exterior to man himself but they reflect also that which the man is. These pictures are permeated through and through with man's own being. This falls like a veil over the other beings. In this case man, even if confronted by a real being, does not see this, but sees what he has himself created. Thus he may have something true before him, and yet see what is false. Indeed, this is not only the case in respect to what man has observed concerning his own entity, but everything which is in him impresses itself upon the spiritual world.

If, for example, a person has secret inclinations, which owing to education and character are precluded from revealing themselves in life, those inclinations will, nevertheless, take effect in the soul and spirit world, which is thus coloured in a peculiar way, due to that person's entity, quite irrespective of how much he may or may not know of his own being. And in order to be able to advance farther from this stage of development

it becomes necessary that man should learn to distinguish between himself and the spiritual world outside him. It is necessary that he should learn to eliminate all the effects produced by his own nature upon the surrounding soul and spirit world. This can be done only by acquiring a knowledge of what we ourselves take with us into this new world. It is therefore primarily a question of self-knowledge, in order that we may become able to perceive clearly the surrounding world of soul and spirit. Now it so happens that certain facts of human development must lead as a natural consequence to such self-knowledge, when the student enters higher worlds. In the ordinary world of the physical senses man is wont to develop his ego, his self-consciousness, and this ego then acts as a point of attraction for all that appertains to man. All personal propensities, sympathies, antipathies, passions, opinions, and so on, possessed by a person, group themselves as it were around his ego, and in a like manner does the ego become the point of attraction for what is called the person's Karma. Were we to see this ego unveiled it would also be possible to note the destinies still awaiting it during this and future incarnations, according as it may have lived in one way or another during former incarnations, and have acquired this or that quality. Encumbered as it is by all this, the ego must be the first picture that presents itself to the human soul, when ascending

into the world of soul and spirit. This, man's double, is bound, in accordance with a law of the spiritual world, to be his first impression in that world. It is easy, if we but consider the following statement, to explain to ourselves this fundamental law. In the life of the physical senses man is cognizant of himself only so far as he is inwardly conscious of himself in his thinking, feeling, and willing. This cognition is inward; it does not present itself to him externally, as do stones, plants, and animals; while again, even in the case of inner experiences, man learns to know himself only partially, for he has within him something that prevents any deeper probing into self-cognition.

This something is an impulse at once to set about altering any quality which he may have discovered within himself, through self-cognition, and about which he indulges in no illusions. Should he not give way to this impulse, but simply turn his attention away from his own self—remaining as he is—he, as a matter of course, deprives himself of even the possibility of knowing himself in regard to that particular matter. Yet should he “explore” himself, facing this or that quality of his without self-deception, he will either be in a position to improve them in himself, or in his present condition of life he will be unable to do so. In the latter case a feeling will steal over his soul which we must designate

as a feeling of shame. Thus, in very truth, does man's healthy nature act, and self-cognition engenders in it manifold kinds of shame. Even in ordinary life this feeling has a certain definite effect. A healthy-minded person who becomes imbued with this feeling in consequence of some quality within him will take care that this quality does not express itself in outward acts and make itself felt by its effects. Thus the sense of shame is a force urging a man to conceal something within himself and not allow it to be outwardly apparent.

If we ponder this sufficiently, we shall find it possible to understand why occult science should ascribe much farther-reaching effects to another inward experience of the soul, very closely allied to this feeling of "being ashamed." To occult science is revealed within the soul a kind of secret feeling of shame, of which man in his life of the physical senses is unaware. Yet this secret feeling acts much in the same way as the conscious feeling of shame of ordinary life to which we have alluded; it prevents man's inmost entity from being able to confront him in a recognizable image, or double. Were this feeling not present, man would see himself as he is in very truth; not only would he inwardly experience his thoughts, ideas, feelings, and decisions, but he would perceive these as he now perceives stones, animals, and plants. This feeling, therefore, is that which

obscures man from himself, and at the same time hides from him the entire spiritual world. For owing to this obscuration of man's inner self, he becomes unable to perceive those things by means of which he is to develop organs for penetrating into the soul and spirit world, and he becomes unable to so transform his own being as to render it capable of obtaining these spiritual organs of perception.

Should he, however, by pursuing the right course of training, work in such a manner as to become possessed of those organs of cognition, then the first impression to present itself to him will be one of himself as he is; he becomes aware of his own double. This self-recognition is inseparable from perception of the rest of the soul and spirit world. In the everyday life of the physical-sense world the feeling of shame here described acts in such a manner as to be perpetually closing the door, as it were, to man's entrance into the world of soul and spirit. If man take but one step, in order to penetrate within that world, straightway does this directly present, yet not actually conscious feeling of shame, conceal that portion of the spiritual world which was ready to be revealed. The exercises here described do, however, unlock this world: and it so happens that the above-mentioned hidden feeling acts as a great benefactor to man, for all we may have gained, apart from occult training, in the matter of judgment,

feeling, and character, is insufficient to support us when confronted by our own entity in its true form; its apparition would rob us of all feeling of self, self-confidence, and self-consciousness. And that this may not happen, provision must be made for cultivating sound judgment, good feeling, and character, at the same time that exercises are given for the attainment of higher knowledge.

A correct method of tuition teaches the student as much of occult science as will, in combination with the many means provided for self-cognition and self-observation, enable him to meet his double with assured strength. It will then appear to the student that he sees, in another form, a picture of the imaginative world with which he has already become acquainted in the physical world. Any one who has first learned in the physical world by means of his understanding to apprehend rightly the law of Karma, is not likely to be greatly perturbed when he sees his fate marked out on the image of his double. Any one who, by means of his own powers of judgment, has made himself acquainted with the evolution of the universe, and the development of the human race, and who is aware that at a particular epoch of this development the powers of Lucifer penetrated into the human soul, will have little difficulty in enduring the sight of the image of his own individuality, when he knows that it includes those

Luciferian powers and all their accumulated effects.

This will therefore suffice to show how necessary it is that no one should demand admission into the spiritual world before having learned to understand certain truths concerning it; learning them by means of his own judgment, as developed in this world of the physical senses. Everything that was imparted in this volume previous to the explanation concerning "cognition of the higher worlds," should have been laid to heart by the student in the course of his regular development, by means of his ordinary judgment, before he has any desire to seek entrance himself into the supersensient worlds.

Where the training has been such as to pay little heed to firmness and surety of judgment, and of the life of feeling and character, it may happen that the student will approach the higher world before being possessed of the necessary inner capacities. The meeting with his double would in this case overwhelm him. But what might also happen is that the meeting might be altogether avoided, and the person in question thus introduced into the supersensible world would be totally unable to know that world in its true form, for it would be impossible for him to differentiate between the appearance which things present to him through his own entity, and that which they really are. For this differentiation becomes possible only when a person has

himself beheld the image of his own entity, and has thus separated from his surroundings everything proceeding from his own inner being.

In respect to the 'world of physical sense, man's double acts thus: the already mentioned sense of shame causes it instantly to disappear when man 'nears the world of the soul and spirit', but in so doing it also causes the whole of that world to become invisible. The double stands before the entrance as a "guardian," ready to deny admission to all who are as yet unfit, and it is therefore designated in occult science as the "guardian of the threshold of the world of soul and spirit." Indeed, we may call it the "lesser guardian," for there is another, of whom we shall speak later.

And besides this meeting with his double on entering the supersensible world as here set forth, man encounters the Guardian of the Threshold when he passes the portals of physical death, and it gradually reveals itself during that development of the soul and spirit which takes place between death and a new birth. Then, however, the encounter can in no wise crush us, for we then know of other worlds of which we are ignorant during the life between birth and death. A person entering the world of the soul and spirit without having encountered the Guardian of the Threshold would be liable to fall a prey to one delusion after another. For he would never be able to distinguish between that which he himself brings

into that world and that which really belongs to it. But correct training should lead the student into the domain of truth, not of error, and with such training the meeting must at some time or other inevitably take place, for it is the one essential remedy, in the observation of the supersensible worlds, against the possibility of deception and phantasm.

It is one of the precautions most incumbent on every occult student to conduct his work of training so as not to degenerate into a visionary, liable to either suggestion, or auto-suggestion; and wherever correct occult training is adhered to, the causes of such deceptions are destroyed at their source. It would of course be impossible here to speak exhaustively of the many details to be included in such precautions, and we can only indicate what these depend on in general. The illusions to be taken into account arise from two sources. In part they proceed from the fact that our own soul-entity is apt to colour reality. In the ordinary life of the physical-sense world, the danger arising from this source of deception is comparatively small, for here we have the external world always ready to assert its own forms distinctly enough, however the observer may choose to colour them in accordance with his own wishes and interests. As soon, however, as we enter the imaginative world, all the pictures are changed by such wishes and interests, and we

have then actually before us that which we ourselves have formed or, at any rate, helped to form. Now, as through this meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold the occult student becomes aware of everything within him, of what, therefore, he may be taking with him into the spiritual world, this source of delusion is removed, and the preparation which will have been given the student prior to his entering that world is in itself calculated to accustom him to exclude self—even in matters appertaining to the physical world—when making his observations, thus allowing things and occurrences to speak for themselves. Any one who has sufficiently practised these preparatory exercises may await this meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold in all tranquillity; by this meeting it will be conclusively proved whether he be really in a condition to exclude his own entity when confronted by the soul and spirit world.

And in addition to this there is another source of delusion. This becomes apparent when we place the wrong interpretation upon an impression we receive. We may illustrate it by means of a very simple example taken from the world of the physical senses. It is the delusion we encounter when sitting in a railway carriage; we *think* the trees are moving in the reverse direction to the train, whereas we ourselves are moving with the train. Although there are many cases in

which such illusions occurring in the physical world are more difficult to correct than the simple one we have adduced, yet it is easy to see that, even within that world, means may be found for getting rid of those delusions if a person of sound judgment brings everything to bear upon the matter which may help to clear it up.

But as soon as we penetrate into the world of the soul and spirit such elucidations become less easy. In the world of sense, facts are not altered by human delusions about them; it is therefore possible to correct a delusion by unprejudiced observation of facts. But in the supersensible world this is not immediately possible. If, desiring to study a supersensible matter, we approach it in the wrong spirit of judgment, we then carry that wrong judgment over into the thing itself, and it becomes interwoven with the fact, the two becoming not at once distinguishable; for the error is no longer in the person and the correct fact exterior to him, but the error will have become a component part of the exterior fact. It cannot therefore be cleared up simply by unprejudiced observation of the fact. This is enough to indicate an extremely fertile source of illusion and deception for one who would venture to approach the supersensible world without adequate preparation.

And as the occult student becomes able to exclude delusions which might tinge the phenomena of the supersensible world with the colour of

his own entity, so too must he acquire the further attribute of making the second source of such delusions ineffective. He can eliminate what arises within himself after the meeting with his own double, and he will be able to remove the second source of delusion when he has acquired the capacity for estimating by the nature of a fact seen in the supersensible world, whether it be real or illusionary. Now if the delusions were of precisely the same appearance as the realities, differentiation would be impossible. But this is not the case. Illusions seen in the supersensible world have their own characteristics, which allow of their being distinguished from realities, and the important thing is for the occult student to know by what qualities he may be able to recognize the reality.

Nothing seems more obvious than that those ignorant of occult training should here say: "How, then, is there any possibility of guarding against delusions, seeing that their causes are so numerous?" And he may further object thus: "Can an occult student ever be safe from the possibility that all his so-called higher experiences may not turn out to be based on no more than suggestion and auto-suggestion?" And yet any one advancing these objections ignores the fact that all true occult training proceeds in such a manner as to remove those sources of delusion one by one. In the first place, the true occult

student will during his preparation have become possessed of so much knowledge about those matters which may lead to delusion and self-delusion, that he will be in a position to avoid them. He will in all such things have an unequalled opportunity of rendering himself level-headed and capable of right judgment for the journey of life. Everything he learns teaches him not to rely on vague presentiments and premonitions. Training makes him as cautious as it is possible for him to be, and, in addition to this, all true training leads in the first place to conceptions as to the great cosmic events,—to matters, therefore, which necessitate the exertion of the judgment, a process by which this power is both refined and sharpened. But such as decline to occupy themselves with these remote subjects, and prefer keeping to revelations nearer at hand, might miss the strengthening of that sound power of judgment which gives certainty in distinguishing between illusion and reality. Yet even this is not the most important thing, for that consists in the exercises themselves, which are carried out during a systematic course of occult training. These are so arranged that the consciousness of the student is enabled during inward meditation to scan minutely all that passes within his soul. In order to bring about imagination, the first thing to be done is to form a symbol. In this there are still elements taken from external

observation; the person himself is not alone concerned in their contents, he does not himself produce them. He may, therefore, fall into error as to the manner in which they are produced, and he may assign their origin to wrong sources. But when the occult student proceeds onward to the exercises for inspiration, he dismisses these contents from his consciousness and immerses himself only in the soul-activity which was occasioned by the symbol. Even here error is still possible: education and study have induced a particular kind of soul-activity in man. He is unable to know everything as to the origin of such activities. Now, however, the occult student sets to work to remove his own soul-activity from his consciousness; should then aught remain, nothing can adhere to it that cannot easily be scanned, nothing can intrude itself that is not easily investigated in respect to its entire contents.

In his intuition, therefore, the occult student possesses something which shows him how a pure reality within the soul and spirit world is constituted, and should he apply this recognized test to all that meets his observation in the realm of spiritual realities he will be well able to distinguish appearance from reality; while he may also feel sure that the application of this law provides just as effectually against delusions in the spiritual world as does the knowledge in the physical world that an *imaginary* piece of red-hot iron cannot burn him.

It is obvious that this test applies only to our own experiences in the supersensible world, and not to communications made to us which we have to apprehend by means of our physical understanding and our healthy sense of truth. The occult student should exert himself to draw a distinct line of demarcation between the knowledge he acquires by the one means, and by the other. He should be ready on the one hand to accept communications made to him regarding the higher worlds, and should seek to understand them by using his powers of judgment. When, however, he is confronted by an "experience," which he may so name because it is due to personal observation, he will first carefully test the same to ascertain whether it possesses exactly those characteristics which he has learned to recognize by means of infallible intuition.

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The meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold being over, the occult student will have to face other new experiences, and the first thing that he will become aware of is the inner connection which exists between this Guardian of the Threshold and that soul-power we have already characterized, when describing the cleavage of personality, as being the seventh power to resolve itself into an independent entity. This seventh entity is, indeed, in certain respects no other than the double, or Guardian of the Threshold itself,

and it lays a particular task upon the student. For what he is in his ordinary self, which now appears to him in an image, has to be led and guided by the new-born self, so that there arises a kind of war against the double, which will be found constantly striving to gain the upper hand. This endeavour to set up the right relationship, this care not to permit of its doing aught but what may result from the influence of the new-born ego, is what endows man's powers with firmness and vigour.

This matter of self-cognition is, in certain respects, different in the higher worlds from what it is in the physical world of sense. For whereas in the latter self-cognition occurs as an inner experience only, the newly born ego becomes immediately discernible as an externally spiritualized vision. We see our new-born ego before us, yet we cannot perceive it in its entirety, for, whatever the step to which we may have climbed on our journey to the supersensible worlds, there will ever be higher steps still, and on these we shall perceive still clearer visions of our "higher self." It can therefore but partially reveal itself to the student, at whatever stage he may be. The temptation here assailing man is tremendous; for having once caught a glimpse of this higher self, he becomes inclined to regard it from the standpoint he has acquired in the world of the physical senses. And yet even this temptation

is salutary; it is indeed necessary, if man's development is to proceed in the right manner. For the student must here note what it is that appears as his double, as the Guardian of the Threshold, and place it ever in front of the higher self, in order that he may rightly observe the disparity between what he is and what he is to become. But while thus engaged in observation he will find that the Guardian of the Threshold will assume quite a different aspect, for it will now reveal itself as a picture of all the *obstacles* which oppose the development of the higher ego, and we then become aware of how great a load the ordinary ego has to drag about with it.

Then, should the student's preparations not have rendered him strong enough to be able to say: "I will not remain at this point, but will persistently work my way upwards toward the higher ego," he will grow weak and will shrink back dismayed before what yet lies before him. Then, though he has plunged into the spiritual world, he will give up trying to work his way farther, and will become a captive to that image which, as Guardian of the Threshold, now confronts the soul. And the remarkable thing here is that the person so situated will have no feeling of being a captive. He will on the contrary think he is going through quite a different experience, for the image called forth by the Guardian of the Threshold may be such as to awaken in

the soul of the observer the impression that in the pictures which appear at this stage of development he has before him all possible worlds in their entirety—the impression of having attained to the summit of all knowledge, and of there being, therefore, nothing left to strive after. Therefore, instead of feeling himself a captive, the student would believe himself rich beyond all measure, and in possession of all the secrets of the universe. Nor need this experience fill any one with surprise, though it be the reverse of the fact, for we must remember that by the time these experiences are felt we are standing within the soul and spirit world, and that the special peculiarity of this world is that it represents events in the reversed order to that in which they actually occur—a fact which has already been alluded to in our survey of life after death.

The image seen by the occult student at this stage of development shows him a different aspect from that in which the Guardian of the Threshold first revealed itself. In the double first mentioned were to be seen all those qualities which, as the result of the influence of Lucifer, are possessed by man's ordinary ego. But in the course of human development another power has, in consequence of Lucifer's influence, also invested the soul of man, this being the one known as the power of Ahriman, and it is this power that during his physical existence prevents man from becoming

aware of those entities of the soul and spirit world which lie behind the surface of the exterior world. All that man's soul has become under the influence of this power may be discerned in the image revealing itself during the experience just described. Those who have been sufficiently prepared for this experience will, when thus confronted, be able to assign it its true meaning, and then another form will soon become visible -- one we may describe as the "greater Guardian of the Threshold"; and this one will tell the student not to rest content with the grade to which he has attained, but to work on energetically. It will call forth in him the consciousness that the world he has conquered will only become a truth, and not an illusion, if the work thus begun be continued in a corresponding manner. Those, however, who, having been trained in accordance with a wrong system of occult science, face this experience unprepared, will, on meeting with the greater Guardian of the Threshold, be filled with feelings of boundless fear and immeasurable horror.

Just as the meeting with the "lesser Guardian" gives the occult student the opportunity of judging whether or not he be proof against delusions, such as might arise through interweaving his own personality with the supersensible world, so too must he be able to prove from the experiences which finally lead to the "greater Guardian," whether he is able to withstand those illusions

which are to be traced to the second source mentioned farther back in this chapter. Should he be proof against the powerful illusion by which the world of images to which he has attained is falsely displayed to him as a rich possession, when actually he is but a captive, then he is guarded also against the danger of mistaking appearance for reality during the further course of his development.

Up to a certain point the Guardian of the Threshold will assume a different form in the case of each individual. The meeting with him corresponds exactly to the way in which the personal nature of supersensible observations is overcome. The possibility is then given of entering a realm of experience which is free from any tinge of personality and is open to every human being.

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When the occult student has passed through the above experiences he will be capable of distinguishing in the spiritual world between what he himself is and what is exterior to him, and he will then recognize why an understanding of the cosmic occurrences narrated in this book is necessary to man's understanding of humanity itself and its life process. In fact, we can understand the physical body only when we recognize the manner in which it has been built up in the developments undergone in the Saturn, the Sun, the Moon, and the earth periods, and we come to understand

the etheric body when we follow its evolution through the development of the Sun, Moon, and earth stages. We further comprehend what is bound up with our earth-development at present if we can but grasp how all things proceed by the process of gradual evolution, so that occult training places us in a position to recognize the connection between everything that is within man and corresponding facts and entities existing in the world exterior to him. For the position is this: that each principle of man stands in some connection with the rest of the world. In this book it has, of course, been possible only to hint at these things very generally; it must however be borne in mind that the physical body had, at the time of the Saturn development, for instance, no more than its first rudimentary beginnings: its organs—such as the heart, lungs, and brain—developed later during the Sun, Moon, and earth periods, for which reason heart, lungs, and brain are related to the evolutionary process of Sun, Moon, and earth.

It is the same thing with regard to the members of the etheric body, of the sentient body, and of the sentient soul. Man is the outcome of the entire world surrounding him, and every single thing about him corresponds to some process, to some entity, in the external world. At the right stage of his development the occult student comes to recognize the connection of his own

entity with the cosmos, and this stage of the development may in the occult sense be described as becoming aware of the relationship of the little world, the microcosm,—that is, man, himself,—to the greater world, the macrocosm. And when the occult student has pressed on thus far he may become aware of a new experience; he begins to feel himself grown together, as it were, with the entire world-structure, although he remains fully conscious of his own independence. This is a merging within the universe, a becoming “at one” with it, yet nevertheless *without* losing the personal identity. Occult science describes this stage as the “becoming one with the macrocosm,” and it is important that this condition must not be imagined as one in which the separate consciousness ceases, the human entity flowing forth into the all, for such a thought would be but the expression of an opinion which is the result of an untutored reasoning.

Following this stage of development something takes place that in occult science is described as “beatitude.” It is neither possible nor necessary that this stage be more closely described, for no human words have the power to picture man’s experiences at that time, and it may rightly be said that any conception of this state could be acquired only by means of such thought-power as would no longer be dependent upon the instrument of the human brain. The separate stages

of the higher knowledge may, following the processes of initiation as described, be thus set forth:

1. The study of occult science, in the course of which we first of all make use of the reasoning powers we have acquired in the world of the physical senses.
2. Attainment of imaginative cognition.
3. Reading the secret writing (which corresponds to inspiration).
4. Working with the philosopher's stone (corresponding to intuition).
5. Cognition of the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm.
6. Being one with the macrocosm.
7. Beatitude.

It is not necessary to imagine these stages as following each other consecutively, for the course of training may very possibly resolve itself in such a way that, according to the individuality of the student, one step may be but partially taken when he will be already practising exercises for the next. For instance, it may very well be that when he has won, in a reliable way, but a few imaginative pictures, he will be already doing exercises which lead him on to draw inspiration, intuition, or cognition of the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm into the sphere of his own experiences.

When the student has acquired some experience of intuition he comes to know not only the pictures of the spiritual world, nor is he only able to read by their light the secret script, but he also acquires knowledge of those beings to whose coöperation is due the creation of the world, to which man himself belongs; thus he learns to know himself in the true form which he possesses as a spiritual being in the soul and spirit world. He has struggled through to the knowledge of his higher ego, and in so doing will have noted how he has to continue the work in order that he may master his double, the Guardian of the Threshold. Yet further on he will have met the "greater Guardian," who stands before him, perpetually summoning him to further labours. It is this greater Guardian of the Threshold who now becomes the example he must strive to resemble, and when the student has acquired this feeling he will have risen to that important stage of development in which he will be in a position to recognize who it is that is really standing before him as that "greater Guardian." For henceforth, in the student's consciousness, the Guardian is gradually transformed into the figure of the Christ, whose Being and intervention in the evolution of the earth have been dealt with in a foregoing chapter.

Thus does it happen that the student, through his intuition, will have become initiated into that

sublime mystery which is linked with the name of Christ—the Christ revealing himself to him as the “Great Example to be held up to humanity on earth.”

When in this manner, and by means of intuition, the Christ becomes recognized in the world of the spirit, then too does it become possible for us to understand those events that took place historically upon earth during the fourth post-Atlantean period (the Greco-Roman time), and how it came to pass that at that epoch the great Sun-Spirit, the Christ-Being, intervened in the world's development, and how He still continues to guide its evolution. These are matters the student will then know by personal experience. Therefore it is through intuition that the meaning and significance of the earth's evolution are disclosed to the occult student.

The path leading to knowledge of the supersensible worlds, as above indicated, is one which all men may travel, whatever their position under the present conditions of life. And in speaking of such a path it must be borne in mind that, while the goal of knowledge and truth is the same at all times of the earth's development, yet the starting-point for man has varied considerably at different periods. For instance, the man of the present day who wishes to find his way into the supersensible worlds, cannot start from the same point as the Egyptian candidate for initiation of

old. This is why it is impossible simply to apply the exercises given to the student of ancient Egypt to the requirements of modern humanity. For since those times men's souls have passed through different incarnations, and this passing onward from incarnation to incarnation has not been without significance and importance. The capabilities and qualities of souls change from one incarnation to another. Those who have studied human history even superficially are in a position to judge how feelings and opinions have changed, since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the Christian era, from what they were in former ages. In fact, not only the feelings and opinions but even the capabilities of men differ from what they were formerly. The path here described for the acquirement of the higher knowledge is one which is suitable for souls incarnating in the immediate present. It fixes the starting-point of spiritual development just where the man of the present day stands, in whatever conditions of life he may be placed.

Just as external life changes its forms, so does progressive evolution lead humanity on from one form to another, as epoch succeeds epoch, in regard to the paths to higher knowledge. For at all times it is necessary that perfect harmony should reign between external life and initiation. In the next chapter indications will be found of the change which has had to take place in the ancient

form of initiation by which the Mysteries led into the higher worlds, in order that it might become modern initiation—the attainment of supersensible knowledge in its present form.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE EVOLUTION OF THE WORLD AND OF HUMANITY

IT is impossible to know anything in the occult sense of the present and future of human or planetary evolution without understanding that evolution in the past. For what presents itself to the occult student's observation when he watches the hidden events of the past, contains at the same time everything that he can learn of the present and of the future. In this book we have spoken of the Saturn, Sun, Moon, and earth evolutions. We cannot follow the evolution of the earth, as the occultist understands it, unless we observe the events of preceding evolutionary periods. For what meets us to-day within the bounds of our earthly globe comprises in a certain sense the facts of the evolution of the Moon, Sun, and Saturn. The beings and things that took part in the evolution of the Moon have gone on developing, and all that now belongs to the earth is the outcome of that development.

But not everything that has been evolved from the Moon to the earth is perceptible to sense-consciousness. A part of that which came over to us from the evolution of the Moon is revealed

only at a certain stage of clairvoyant consciousness, at which the knowledge of supersensual worlds is reached. When this knowledge is gained, the fact that our earthly planet is united to a supersensible world is recognized. The latter includes that part of lunar existence which is not sufficiently intensified to be observed by the physical senses. At first we see in it that part as it is at present,—not as it was at the time of the evolution of the original Moon. But clairvoyant consciousness can get a picture of the conditions of that earlier period. For by concentration on the images which clairvoyant consciousness can obtain to-day, it is seen that this picture gradually divides into two. One presents the shape borne by the earth during the lunar evolution, the other shows itself in such a way that we recognize as its content a form as yet in the germinal stage, which will become a reality—in the sense in which the earth is now a reality—only in the future.

On further observation it is seen that the results, in a certain sense, of what is taking place on the earth are continually streaming into that future form, so that in it we have before us that which our earth will ultimately become. The effects of earthly existence will unite with the events in the world described, and out of this will arise the new world-being, into which the earth will be transformed, as the Moon was transformed

into the earth. This future form is called in occult science the Jupiter condition. The clairvoyant observer of this Jupiter state sees the revelation of certain events which *must* take place in the future. The reason for this is that in the supersensible part of the earth which had its origin in the Moon, beings and things are present which will assume definite form when certain events have actually happened in the physical world. Thus there will be something in the Jupiter condition which was predetermined by the Moon evolution, and it will contain new factors, coming into the whole evolution only in consequence of terrestrial events. In this way clairvoyant consciousness is able to learn something of what will happen during the Jupiter state.

The beings and facts observed in this field of consciousness have not the nature of sense-images; they do not even appear as fine air-structures, from which effects might proceed which are reminiscent of sense-impressions. They give purely spiritual impressions of sound, light, and heat. These are *not* expressed through any material embodiments. They can be apprehended only by clairvoyant consciousness. And yet it may be said that these beings have a "body." This body, however, appears within their soul-part, which manifests as their being, for the time, like a mass of *condensed memories*, which they carry within their psychic being. It is possible

to distinguish, within their being, between what they are now experiencing and what they have experienced and now remember. This last is contained within them like a bodily element. They are conscious of it in the same way as an earthly human being is conscious of his body.

At a stage of clairvoyant development higher than that just described as necessary for a knowledge of the Moon and Jupiter, the student is able to perceive supersensible beings and objects which are, in fact, more highly developed forms of those present during the Sun condition, but which have now reached stages of existence so lofty as to be quite imperceptible to a consciousness capable only of observing the Moon forms. During deep meditation the picture of this world also divides into two. The one leads to a knowledge of the Sun state of the past; the other exhibits a future form of the earth—that into which the latter shall be transformed when the fruits of all that takes place on it and on Jupiter have merged into the forms of that other world.

What can thus be observed of this future world may be characterized in occult phraseology as the Venus condition. In a similar manner, to a still more highly evolved clairvoyant consciousness, a future state of evolution is revealed, which we may call the Vulcan state. It stands in the same relationship to the Saturn state as the Venus condition does to that of the Sun, or the Jupiter

state to the evolution of the Moon. Therefore, when we contemplate the past, present, and future of the earth's evolution, we may speak of the Saturn, Sun, Moon, earth, Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan evolutions.

Just as these far-reaching conditions of the evolution of our earth lie disclosed to clairvoyant vision, the same vision is also able to cover the nearer future. There is a picture of the future corresponding to every picture of the past. But in speaking of such things one point must be emphasized, the realization of which should be considered absolutely indispensable: in order to recognize facts of this kind, we must absolutely do away with the idea that mere philosophical reflection upon the subject can establish anything. These things cannot, and must not, ever be investigated by that kind of thinking. Any one would be labouring under a prodigious delusion who, after becoming acquainted with the teachings of occult science regarding the Moon state, was to think that he could discover the future conditions of Jupiter by comparing those of the Moon and earth. These conditions must be investigated only when the requisite clairvoyant consciousness has been attained; but once communicated to others after such investigation, they can be understood without any clairvoyant consciousness.

Now the occultist finds himself in quite a different position, with regard to revelations concerning

the future, from that in which he stands with regard to those of the past. It is impossible at first for man to contemplate future events with the equanimity which is possible for him with regard to the past. Future events excite human will and feeling; while the past affects us in quite a different way. A student of life knows how true this is of everyday existence; but how enormously this truth is enhanced, and what an intimate bearing it has upon the hidden facts of life, can only be realized by one who has some knowledge of the superphysical world. That is the reason why those who do know such things are very definitely limited as to what they are allowed to give out. Certain things bearing on the future can, in fact, be imparted only to those who have themselves determined to follow the path leading to the supersensible worlds. Such people have acquired by their mental attitude something which gives them the disinterestedness necessary for the reception of these teachings. For this reason certain secret facts, even of the past and present, can be spoken of only to such as are prepared for them. These are facts so closely connected with future evolution that their effect on the human soul is similar to that produced by communications regarding the future itself.

This explains, also, why the information in this book regarding the present and the future is given in the merest outline as compared with the

more detailed descriptions of the evolution of the world and of humanity in the past. What is said here is not intended to appeal to the love of sensation in the smallest degree; not even to awaken it. We shall only state where the answer can be found by a certain definite attitude of mind to vital questions which naturally present themselves.

Just as the great cosmic evolution can be portrayed in a series of conditions following one another, from the Saturn to the Vulcan period, so also is this possible for shorter periods of time; for example, for those of the evolution of the earth. Since that mighty upheaval which terminated the ancient Atlantean life, successive periods of human evolution have followed one another which have been called in this work the ancient Indian, the ancient Persian, the Egypto-Chaldean, and the Greco-Roman. The fifth period is that in which humanity finds itself to-day—it is the present time. This period gradually took its rise in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries A.D., after a period of preparation commencing in the fourth and fifth centuries. The Greco-Roman period preceding it began about the eighth century B.C. When one third of this period had elapsed, the coming of the Christ took place.

During the transition from the Egypto-Chaldean to the Greco-Roman period, the attitude of the human mind and, indeed, all human capacities;

underwent a change. In the first of these two periods that which we now know as logical reflection, as a reasonable conception of the world, was still wanting. The knowledge which a man now acquires through his intelligence he then gained in the manner suited to that time,—directly through an inner or, in a certain respect, clairvoyant knowledge. He saw the things around him, and while perceiving them the conception—the vision of them which the soul needed—arose within the consciousness. Whenever knowledge is gained in this way, not only do pictures of the physical sense-world come to light, but from the depths of consciousness there arises a certain knowledge of facts and beings which are not of the physical world. This was a remnant of the ancient dim clairvoyance, once the common property of the whole of humanity.

During the Greco-Roman period an ever-increasing number of individuals appeared without these capacities. Intelligent reflection concerning things took their place. These individuals were more and more shut off from the immediate perception of the spiritual world, and were more and more restricted to forming a picture of it through their intelligence and feeling. This condition lasted more or less during the whole of the fourth division of the post-Atlantean period. Only those individuals who had preserved the old mental state as an inheritance could still become directly

conscious of the spiritual world. But these were stragglers from an earlier time. Their manner of gaining knowledge was no longer suitable for later conditions. For, as a consequence of the laws of evolution, an old faculty of the soul loses something of its former significance when new capacities appear. Human life then adapts itself to these new capacities, and can no longer properly use the old capacities.

There were individuals, however, who began in full consciousness to add, to the powers of intelligence and of feeling already gained, the development of other and higher powers, which made it possible for them once more to penetrate into the spiritual world. To this end they were obliged to set to work in a different way from that in which the pupils of the old Initiates had been trained. The latter had not been obliged to take into account those faculties of the soul which were developed only in the fourth period. The method of occult training which has been described in this work as that of the present age, began in its first rudiments in the fourth period. But it was then only at its commencement; it could not attain real maturity till the fifth period (from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onward). Those who sought to rise into supersensible worlds in this manner could learn something of the higher regions of existence through the exercise of their own imagination, inspiration, and intuition. Those

who went no further than the development of the faculties of reason and feeling could learn only through tradition what had been known to ancient clairvoyance. This was handed on, either by word of mouth or in writing, from generation to generation.

Neither could those born later know anything of the real nature of the Christ-event save by such traditions, if they did not view it from the level of the superphysical worlds. Initiates there certainly were who still possessed the natural faculties of perception on the higher planes, and who by the development of those faculties did ascend thither, in spite of their disregard of the new powers of intelligence and feeling. Through them a transition was effected from the old method of Initiation to the new. Such persons lived in later times as well. The essential characteristic of the fourth period is that, by the exclusion of the soul from direct communion with the psychospiritual world, the human faculties of intelligence and feeling were thereby strengthened and invigorated. The souls whose powers of intelligence and feeling had at that time developed to a great extent as the result of incarnation, carried over with them the fruits of this development into their incarnations during the fifth period. As a compensation for this exclusion from the higher worlds, mighty traditions of the Ancient Wisdom then existed, especially those of the Christ-event,

which by the power of their content gave men confident knowledge of the higher worlds.

But there were still certain individuals existing who had evolved the higher powers of knowledge in addition to the faculties of reason and feeling. It devolved upon them to learn the facts of the higher worlds, and especially of the Mystery of the Christ-event, by direct supersensible perception. From these individuals there always flowed into the souls of other men as much as was intelligible and good for them.

The first extension of Christianity was to take place just at a time when the capacities for super-physical knowledge were undeveloped in a great part of humanity. It was on this account that the power of tradition was at that time so enormous. The strongest force was necessary to lead individuals who could not themselves behold the supersensible world to believe in it. How Christianity worked during that period has been shown in previous pages. There were always those, however, who were able to rise into higher worlds through imagination, inspiration, and intuition. These men were the post-Christian successors of the old Initiates, the teachers and members of the Mysteries. Their task was to recognize again, through their own faculties, what man had been able to perceive through the ancient clairvoyance, and through the methods of ascent into higher worlds taught in the old Initiations; and

in addition to this, to acquire the knowledge of the real nature of Christ's advent.

Thus there arose, among these "New Initiates," a knowledge embracing everything contained in the old form of Initiation; but the central point of this teaching was the higher knowledge concerning the Mysteries of the coming of the Christ. Such teaching could only filter through into the general life of the world in scanty measure, for the faculties of intellect and feeling were to be strengthened in the human soul during the fourth period; therefore, while this lasted, the doctrine was in truth secret. Then began the dawn of the new period designated as the fifth. Its essential characteristic lay in the progress made in the evolution of the intellectual faculties, which were then developed to a very high degree, and will unfold still further in the future. This process has been slowly going on from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, becoming ever more rapid from the sixteenth century up to the present time.

Under these influences the evolution of the fifth period became an ever-increasing endeavour to foster the powers of intellect, while, on the contrary, the knowledge by faith of former times, and the traditional wisdom, gradually lost its hold over the human soul. On the other hand, from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onward an ever increasing stream of knowledge flowed

into the human soul, which was of the nature of modern clairvoyant consciousness. The "secret doctrine" flows, even though at first quite imperceptibly, into human modes of interpretation during this period. It is therefore a matter of course that up to the present, intellectual faculties should have maintained an attitude of denial with regard to this knowledge. But that which must come to pass will do so in spite of all temporary rejection. The "secret doctrine" which through this avenue comes to take possession of humanity, and will continue to do so increasingly, may be called from a symbol the "Wisdom of the Holy Grail."

For he who learns to understand this symbol in its deeper meaning, as it is told in story and legend, will find that it illuminates significantly the nature of what has been called above the knowledge of the new Initiation, with the Christ Mystery as its central point. Modern Initiates may therefore be called "the Initiates of the Grail." The path to the superphysical worlds which has been described in this work in its preliminary stages, leads to the Wisdom of the Grail. It is a peculiarity of this wisdom that its facts can be investigated only when the requisite powers, as described in this book, have been acquired. Once investigated, however, these facts can be understood by means of those very soul-forces which are the result of the evolution of the fifth

period. Indeed, it will become more and more evident that to an ever increasing extent those forces find satisfaction through this knowledge. We are now living at a time in which such facts must be absorbed by the universal consciousness to a much fuller extent than was formerly the case. And it is from this point of view that the teachings contained in this work are put forward. The impulse given by Christ's advent will grow ever mightier in proportion as human evolution assimilates the Wisdom of the Grail. The inner side of the development of Christianity will more and more be associated with the exoteric side. That which may be learned in connection with the Christ Mystery by imagination, inspiration, and intuition, concerning the higher worlds, will interpenetrate ever more and more the human world of ideas, of feeling, and of will. The secret wisdom teaching of the Grail will become manifest, and as an inner force will more and more permeate the manifestations of human life.

Through the whole of the fifth period, knowledge concerning the supersensible world will flow into human consciousness; and when the sixth begins, humanity will be able at a higher level to regain that which it possessed at an earlier epoch in a clairvoyance as yet dim and indistinct. Yet the new acquisition will take a form quite different from the old. In olden times the soul's knowledge of higher worlds was not

permeated by its own forces of intelligence and feeling. Its knowledge was instinctive. In the future it will not only have intuitions, but will *understand* them, and feel them to be the essence of its own nature. When the soul learns a fact concerning some other being or thing, its intelligence will find this fact verified through its own nature. Or when some fact regarding a moral law or human conduct makes itself felt, the soul will say to itself: "My feeling is only justified when I carry out that which is implied in this knowledge." An attitude of mind such as this will have to be developed in a considerable number of individuals in the sixth period.

In a certain manner, that which human evolution accomplished during the third period—the Egypto-Chaldean—is repeated in the fifth. At that time the soul could still perceive certain facts of the superphysical worlds, but this perception was fast disappearing. For the intellectual powers were being made ready for their evolution, and they were destined in the first instance to shut man out of the higher worlds. In the fifth period the supersensible facts which in the third were perceived in hazy clairvoyance are again becoming manifest; but they are now interpenetrated by the intellectual and emotional life of the individual man. They are also imbued with what may be imparted to the soul by a knowledge of the Christ Mystery; therefore they assume a

form totally different from that which they had previously. Whereas in ancient times impressions from the higher worlds were felt as forces driving man out of a spiritual world, to which he did not properly belong, through the development in later times these impressions are felt as those of a world into which man is growing, of which he more and more forms a part. Let no one suppose that a repetition of the Egypto-Chaldean civilization can take place in such a way that the soul would merely regain that which then existed, and which has been handed on from that time. The Christ-impulse, rightly understood, impels the human soul which has experienced it to feel itself a member of a spiritual world, recognizing it as a world to which it belongs, outside which it formerly existed.

As during the fifth period the characteristics of the third are thus revived, in order to perfect within the human soul that which the fourth has newly contributed, so in a similar way will things happen in the case of the sixth in relation to the second, and in the case of the seventh with regard to the first, the ancient Indian civilization mentioned above. All the marvellous wisdom of ancient India which the great teachers of that day were able to proclaim, will reappear in the seventh period, as living truth in human souls.

Now the changes in the earthly environment of man take place in a manner which bears a certain

relationship to his own evolution. When the seventh period has run its course, the earth will experience an upheaval which may be compared with the one which separated Atlantean from post-Atlantean times. And the transformed earth will again continue its evolution in seven divisions of time. The human souls which will then incarnate will experience at a more exalted level the kinship with the higher worlds which was possessed by the Atlanteans at a lower stage. But only those individuals will be able to cope with the new conditions of earth who have built into their souls the qualities made possible by the influences of the Greco-Roman age, and of the periods following it,—the fifth, sixth, and seventh of the post-Atlantean evolution.

The content of such souls will then be in right relation with that stage of evolution which the earth has then attained. All other souls must then remain behind, although up to that point they had been able to choose whether or not they would create for themselves the conditions necessary to advance with the others. Those souls alone will be ripe for the conditions arising after the next great catastrophe, who at the point of transition from the fifth to the sixth post-Atlantean period have attained the capacity for interpenetrating supersensual knowledge with the forces of intelligence and of feeling. The fifth and sixth are in a way the decisive periods. Those

souls which have attained the goal of the sixth period will, it is true, continue to develop correspondingly in the seventh; but the others will, under the altered conditions of their surroundings, find but little opportunity to proceed with their neglected task. Only in a distant future will conditions again appear which will allow of this being done.

Thus does evolution advance from period to period. Clairvoyance observes not only those changes in the future in which the earth alone takes part, but those also which take place in conjunction with the heavenly bodies round about it. A time will come in which the terrestrial and human evolution will be advanced so far that those forces and beings which were compelled to detach themselves from the earth during the Lemurian period, so as to afford the earth-beings the possibility of further progress, will be able once more to unite with the earth. Then the moon will be united with the earth again. This will happen because a sufficiently large number of human souls will then possess the inner powers which will enable them to render the Moon forces fruitful for further development. And it will occur at a time when side by side with the high development which a sufficient number of human souls will have attained, another group will reveal itself which has chosen the path of evil. The laggard souls will have accumulated so much

error, ugliness, and evil, in the form of Karma, that at first they will form a separate community, a perverse and erring section of humanity, keenly opposing what we understand as "good." The "good" humanity will acquire little by little the power of using the Moon forces, and will thereby so transform the evil section also as to enable it to keep pace with the advance of evolution as a separate earth kingdom. Through these labours of the good part of humanity, the earth, then reunited with the moon, will be able, after a certain period of development, to unite with the sun again and with the other planets also.

After an intermediate state, which resembles a sojourn in a higher world, the earth will be transformed into the Jupiter condition. That which we now call the mineral kingdom will not exist on Jupiter; the forces of this mineral kingdom will be transformed into vegetable forces. But the vegetable kingdom, which will have quite a new form as compared with its present one, will appear in the Jupiter state as the lowest of the kingdoms. Above it, at a higher level, is organized the animal kingdom, likewise transformed; next comes a human kingdom—the descendant of the evil community which had previously arisen on the earth. And then will appear the descendants of the good humanity of earth, as a human kingdom on a higher level.

A great part of the work of this last human kingdom consists in ennobling the souls which

have sunk into the evil community, so that they may still gain admittance into the true human Kingdom. The Venus condition will be of such a nature that the vegetable kingdom will have disappeared also; the lowest kingdom will be the animal kingdom once more transformed, and, ascending from the latter, there will be three human kingdoms at different stages of perfection. The earth will remain united with the sun during the Venus period; while during that of Jupiter it will have happened that at a certain point the sun separates once again from Jupiter, the latter receiving its influence from outside. Then there is again a union between the sun and Jupiter, and the transformation gradually passes into the Venus state. During that state another planet detaches itself from Venus, containing all kinds of beings which have opposed evolution, an "irredeemable moon," as it were, following a path of evolution which is of a character impossible to describe, because it is too unlike anything man can experience on earth. But evolved humanity will pass on in a fully spiritualized state of existence to the Vulcan evolution, a description of which lies beyond the scope of this work.

We see that from the fruits of the Wisdom of the Grail springs the highest ideal of human evolution conceivable for man: spiritualization attained by him through his own efforts. For in the end this spiritualization appears as a product of the

harmony which he wrought out in the fifth and sixth periods of the present evolution, between the faculties of reason and emotion which he had then attained, and the knowledge of superphysical worlds. That which he thus builds up in his soul must itself at last become the objective world. The human spirit rises to the mighty impacts of the universe around him, and has at first a faint premonition of spiritual beings behind the impressions he has received. He recognizes these beings at a later period. The human heart feels the sublimity of this spiritual state; but man may also realize that his own inner experiences of intellect, feeling, and character are the germs of a spiritual world which is to come.

He who supposes that human liberty is not compatible with a foreknowledge and predestination of future conditions, ought to consider that man's freedom of action in the future depends just as little on the arrangement of predestined things as does his liberty of action with regard to inhabiting a house a year hence, the plans for which he is now settling. He will be, as free as he can be, in accordance with his innermost being, within the house he has built; and he will be as free on Jupiter and on Venus as his inner life permits, subject to the conditions which will arise there. Freedom will not depend on what has been predetermined by antecedent conditions, but on that which the soul has made out of itself.

In the earth condition is contained that which has developed within the preceding Saturn, Sun, and Moon states. The earth-man finds "wisdom" in the processes going on around him. This wisdom is there, as the fruit of what has happened in the past. The earth is the descendant of the "old Moon"; and the latter developed with all that belonged to it into the "Cosmos of Wisdom." The earth is now at the commencement of an evolution, which will introduce a new force into this wisdom. It will cause man to feel himself an independent member of a spiritual world. This will come to pass because his ego will have been formed within him during the earth period by the Lords of Form, as was his physical body on Saturn by the Lords of Will, his vital body on the Sun by the Lords of Wisdom, and his astral body on the Moon by the Lords of Motion. •

By means of the coöperation of the Lords of Will, Wisdom, and Motion, that which manifests as wisdom is brought forth. Through the labours of these three classes of spirits, the beings and processes of earth can harmonize in wisdom with the other beings of the world. It is the Lords of Form who bestow on man his independent ego. In the future this ego will harmonize with the beings of earth, of Jupiter, of Venus, and of Vulcan, by means of the force added to the existing wisdom during the earth period. It is the force of love. This force must arise in the humanity

of earth; and the Cosmos of Wisdom be developed into a *Cosmos of Love*. Everything which the ego is able to unfold within itself must give birth to love. The all-embracing archetype of love is set forth in the manifestation of that lofty spirit of the Sun indicated in the description of the Christ Mystery. By this means the germ of love is planted in the innermost core of human nature; and from this starting-point it must flow through the whole of evolution. Just as the wisdom previously formed manifests in the forces of the physical world of earth, in the "forces of nature" of to-day, so will love itself manifest in the future, in all phenomena, as the new "natural force."

The secret of all further development in the future is that knowledge and everything achieved by man from a right comprehension of the world process is a sowing of seed which must ripen into love. And the greater the amount of love-power, so much the greater will be the creative force available for the future. In that which will grow from love will lie the mighty forces leading to that culminating point of spiritualization described above. The greater the amount of spiritual knowledge that flows into human and terrestrial evolution, so much the more living and fruitful seed will be stored up for the future. Spiritual knowledge is transmuted *through its own nature* into love. The whole process which

has been described, ranging from the Greco-Roman to the end of the present period, exhibits the way in which this transformation is to take place, and shows why so great a part of its development must lie in the future. That which has been preparing as wisdom on Saturn, Sun, and Moon is active in the physical, etheric, and astral bodies of man; it shows itself there as the Wisdom of the World, but within the ego it is intensified. The wisdom of the outer world becomes inner wisdom in man from the earth period onward, and when it is concentrated in him it becomes the germ of love. Wisdom is the necessary condition for love; love is the fruit of wisdom, reborn in the ego.

VII

DETAILS FROM THE DOMAIN OF OCCULT SCIENCE MAN'S ETHERIC BODY

WHEN the higher principles of man are observed with clairvoyant vision, the mode of perception is never precisely the same as that which comes from the outer senses. If we touch an object, and experience a sensation of warmth, we must distinguish between that which comes from the object and which, as it were, streams out from it, and our own psychic experience. The inner psychic experience of perceiving warmth is something different from the heat which streams from the object. Now let us imagine this psychic experience quite by itself without the outer object. Let us call up the experience of a sensation of heat in our soul, without the presence of any external physical object to cause it. If such a sensation existed *without* cause, it would be merely fancy. The student of occult science experiences such inner perceptions without any physical cause. But at a certain stage of development they present themselves in such a manner that he knows (as it has been shown that by the very nature of the experience he can know), that the inner perception is not fancy, but is caused

by a psycho-spiritual being belonging to a supersensible world; just as the ordinary sensation of heat, for example, is caused by an external physical-sense object.

It is the same with regard to the perception of colour in the supersensible world. Here we must distinguish between the colour associated with the outer object, and the inner colour-sensation in the soul. Let us call up the soul's inner sensation when it perceives a *red* object in the physical, outer world of sense. Let us imagine that we retain a very vivid recollection of the impression, but that we are looking away from the object. What we still retain as a memory picture of the colour let us imagine as an inner experience. We shall then distinguish between that which is an inner experience of the colour, and the external colour itself. These inner experiences differ entirely in their content from impressions of the outer senses. Much more do they bear the impress of what is felt as joy and sorrow than that of normal physical sensations. Now let us imagine an inner experience of this kind arising in the soul without any suggestion arising from an outer sense object. A clairvoyant may have an experience of this kind, and may know too in that case that it is no fancy, but the expression of a psycho-spiritual being. Now if this psycho-spiritual being excite the same impression as does a red object of the physical-sense world,

then that being is red. There will, however, always be the external impression first, and then the inner experience of colour, in the case of the physical-sense object; in that of the genuine clairvoyance of a man of to-day it *must* be the contrary,—first the inner experience, shadowy, like a mere recollection of colour, and then a picture, growing more and more vivid. The less heed we pay to the necessary sequence of these occurrences, the less are we able to distinguish between actual, spiritual perception and the delusions of fancy (illusion, hallucination, and so on).

The vividness of the picture in a psycho-spiritual perception of this kind, whether it remain quite shadowy, like a dim imagination, or whether it appear in a distinct form, like an external object, depends altogether on the clairvoyant's possibilities of development. Now, the general impression obtained by the clairvoyant of the etheric body may be thus described. When the clairvoyant has strengthened his will power to such a degree that, in spite of the fact that an individual stands before him in a physical body, he can abstract his attention from what the physical eye sees,—he is then able to see clairvoyantly into the space occupied by the man's physical body. Of course, a great increase of will power is necessary, in order to withdraw the attention not only from something in the mind, but from something standing before one, in such-

a way that the physical impression is quite extinguished. But the increase is possible, and is brought about by the exercises for the attainment of supersensible knowledge. When these have been successful, the clairvoyant may gain first of all the general impression of the etheric body. Within his soul there arises the same inner sensation which he has, let us say, at the sight of a peach blossom; and then this becomes vivid, so that he is able to say that the etheric body has the colour of peach blossoms. He next perceives the separate organs and currents of the etheric body. A further description of the etheric body may be given by relating the psychic experiences corresponding to sensations of heat or of sound-impressions, for it is not merely a phenomenon of light. The astral body and other principles of human nature may also be described in like manner. If this be taken into account it will be seen in what sense descriptions must be understood which are given from the standpoint of occult science.

THE ASTRAL WORLD

As long as we observe the physical world only, the earth, as man's dwelling place, appears like a separate planet. But when supersensible knowledge rises to higher spheres, this separateness ceases. It may therefore be said that the imagination perceives the Moon condition, as developed up to the present, at the same time that it perceives

the earth. Now the world which is entered in this fashion is such that not only the supersensible part of the earth belongs to it, but that other planets are also to be found in it which are physically apart from the earth. Therefore one who is familiar with higher worlds observes not only the supersensible regions of the earth but at the same time the supersensible part of other planets also. (Should any one be impelled to ask why clairvoyants do not report as to how things appear on Mars and the other planets, he should bear in mind that it is first of all a question of observing the supersensible conditions of other planetary bodies, whereas the questioner has in view the physical-sense conditions.) On this account it was possible to make in this work statements regarding certain relations between the earth's evolution and the contemporary evolution on Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and so on. Now when the human astral body has been drawn away by sleep, it belongs not only to the conditions of earth but to worlds in which yet other regions of the universe (stellar worlds) have their part. Nay, these worlds extend their influence to man's astral body even when he is awake. For this reason the name "astral body" appears to be justified.

OF MAN'S LIFE AFTER DEATH

Mention has been made, in the course of this book, of the time during which the astral body

still remains joined to the etheric body of man after death has supervened. During this time there remains a recollection, gradually growing fainter, of the whole of the life just ended. The duration of this time varies in different individuals. It depends upon the strength with which the astral body clings to the etheric body, on the power which the former has over the latter. Occult science makes it possible to obtain an idea of that power by observing a person who, judging from his degree of fatigue, must of necessity fall asleep, and yet, by sheer strength of mind, keeps awake. It then appears that different people can keep awake for periods varying in length. About as long as a man in an extreme case can keep awake, so long does memory of a past life, or in other words the connection with the etheric body, last after death.

* * *

When the etheric body is detached from the individual after death, something of it nevertheless remains for the purpose of the man's whole subsequent development—what may be described as an extract, or the essence of it. This extract contains the result of the past life, and is the vehicle of all that which, during the man's spiritual development between death and a new birth, unfolds like a germ for the life following.

* * *

The duration of time between death and new

birth is determined by the fact that the ego as a rule does not return to the physical-sense world until that world has been so transformed that the ego can experience something new. During its sojourn in spiritual regions its dwelling place on earth undergoes a change. But this change is connected with the great changes in the universe, with changes in the relationship between earth and sun, and so forth. These are changes in which certain cyclic repetitions take place, in connection with new conditions. They find an external expression in the fact, for example, that the point in the vault of heaven at which the sun rises at the beginning of spring makes a complete circuit in the course of about twenty-six thousand years. Hence this vernal point moves in the course of the period mentioned from one region of the heavens to another. In the course of the twelfth part of the time, that is to say, in about twenty-one hundred years, conditions on the earth have changed there so far that the human soul can experience something new since its last incarnation. As, however, the experiences of an individual vary according as incarnation is as a woman or as a man, there are, as a rule, two incarnations within the time stated, one as a man and one as a woman. But these things are also dependent on the nature of the forces which man carries with him from his earthly existence through death. Hence all statements of the kind here

made are only to be understood as generally valid, but as presenting in particular cases the most manifold variations.

THE COURSE OF HUMAN LIFE

• • Man's life, as expressed in the sequence of conditions between birth and death, can be fully understood only by taking into account both the physical body with its senses and the changes undergone by man's supersensual principles. Occult science views those changes in the following manner. Physical birth is seen to be the extrication of the human being from its maternal covering. Forces which before birth the embryo shared in common with its mother's body, are present independently in the child after birth. But in later life superphysical events, similar to those of sense which are enacted at the physical birth, are visible to clairvoyant sight. That is to say, a child, as regards its etheric body, is enveloped in an etheric covering until the approach of the change of teeth (in the sixth or seventh year). The etheric covering falls away at that period, and here the "birth" of the etheric body occurs. But the child is still surrounded by an astral covering, which falls off between its twelfth and sixteenth year (at the time of puberty). This is the "birth" of the astral body; and at a still later period the real ego is born.¹

• ¹The suggestive points of view for the conduct of education resulting

Now after the birth of the ego man lives in such a fashion that he adapts himself to the conditions of the world and of life, and occupies himself within them according to the capabilities of the principles working through his ego,—the sentient, the rational, and the self-conscious soul. Then comes a time in which the etheric body retraces the process of its development from the seventh year onward in reverse order. Whereas before this the astral body had developed in such a way as first of all to unfold that which was present at birth as the embryo, and which then, after the birth of the ego, enriched itself by the experiences of the outer world, it begins at a certain moment to feed spiritually on its own etheric body. It lives on the etheric body; and during the further course of life the etheric body also begins to prey on the physical body.

The decay of the physical body in old age is a consequence of this. The course of human life therefore falls into three divisions: a time of unfoldment for the physical and etheric bodies, then one in which the astral body and the ego develop, and lastly that in which the etheric and physical bodies are changed back again. But the astral body plays a part in all the events that take place between birth and death. Since it is really born in a spiritual sense only between the

from a knowledge of these supersensible facts are presented in my little book, *The Education of Children from the Standpoint of Theosophy*, in which will be found fuller details of what can here only be hinted at.

twelfth and sixteenth years, and must during its latest life-period draw upon the forces of the etheric and physical bodies, that which it is able to perform by its own powers will develop more slowly than if it were not within a physical and an etheric body. After death, when the physical and etheric bodies have fallen away, evolution, during the time of purification, proceeds in such a manner that it occupies about one third of the duration of life between birth and death.

THE HIGHER REGIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

By imagination, inspiration, and intuition, supersensual knowledge gradually ascends into those regions of the spiritual world within which it can reach the beings who have to do with human and cosmic evolution. And by such a faculty it is also possible to trace intelligibly human evolution between death and a new birth in such a way that it is comprehensible. Now there are still higher regions of existence, which can here be only briefly indicated. When supersensual knowledge has risen to intuition, it lives in a world of spiritual beings. These too are evolving. That which concerns the humanity of the present day extends upward in a certain sense as far as the world of intuition. True, man receives impulses from yet higher worlds in the course of his evolution between death and re-birth. But he does not experience these impulses directly;

they are guided to him by beings belonging to the spiritual world. And when these come into view everything that happens to man stands revealed. But the special conditions of these beings, that which they themselves require in order to guide human evolution, can be seen only by means of a cognition that transcends intuition. " We thus have a glimpse of worlds which we must imagine of such a nature that the most highly spiritual features of the earth are there among the lowest. Wise decisions are, for example, some of the highest things within the sphere of earth; the activities of the mineral kingdom are among the lowest. In those higher spheres wise resolutions correspond to about what the mineral activities are on earth. Above the domain of intuition lies the region in which the cosmic plan is woven out of spiritual causes. "

THE PRINCIPLES OF MAN

When it is said that the ego works on the human principles, on the physical, the etheric, and the astral bodies, and transforms them in reverse order into Spirit-Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit-Man, this statement relates to the work of the ego on the human being by means of the highest faculties; the development of these begins only under earthly conditions. But this transformation is preceded at a lower level by another change, giving rise to the sentient, the intellectual or rational, and the self-conscious soul. For while, in the course "

of human evolution, the sentient soul is being formed, changes are taking place in the astral body; also the growth of the intellectual soul expresses itself in transformations in the etheric body; and that of the self-conscious soul in similar transformations in the physical body. Fuller information on this subject has been given in this book in the accounts of the evolution of the earth. Thus in a certain sense we may say that the sentient soul itself is the result of a transformed astral body, the intellectual or rational soul of a transformed etheric body, and the self-conscious soul of a transformed physical body. But we may also say that these three divisions of the soul are parts of the astral body; for example, the self-conscious soul is only possible because it is an astral entity existing in a physical body suited to it. It lives an astral life within a physical body fashioned to be its dwelling place.

THE DREAM STATE

A description of the dream state has been given in another chapter of this work. On the one hand it is to be regarded as a relic of the old picture-consciousness peculiar to man during the Moon evolution, and also during a great part of the evolution of the earth. Evolution goes forward in such a way that earlier conditions resolve themselves into later ones. And so, in the dream state, there now appears in man a relic of what

was once his normal condition. But at the same time this condition is from another aspect different from the old picture-consciousness. For since its development the ego also has taken part in those activities of the astral body which are carried on during sleep in the dream life. Thus through the presence of the ego there arises in dreams a transformed picture-consciousness. But since the ego does not consciously exercise its authority over the astral body during dream life, nothing belonging to the sphere of that life can be regarded as really able to lead to a knowledge of higher worlds in an occult sense. Something similar holds good with regard to what is often called vision, premonition, or "second sight." These arise through the silencing of the ego, and the consequent appearance of remnants of the old condition of consciousness. In occult science these are of no value. What may be observed in them cannot in any real sense be regarded as its result.

THE ATTAINMENT OF SUPERPHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE

The way to attain knowledge of the higher worlds, which has been more fully described in this book, may also be called the "path of direct knowledge." In addition to this path there is another, which we may designate as the "path of feeling." It would be quite a mistake, however, to believe that the former had nothing to do with

the development of feeling. Rather does it lead to the greatest possible deepening of the life of feeling. But the "path of feeling" addresses itself directly and solely to the feelings, and seeks from this point to rise to knowledge. It rests on the fact that when the soul entirely surrenders itself to a feeling for a certain length of time, the latter is transformed into knowledge, into intuitive vision, by means of images. When, for example, the soul is filled for weeks or months, or even longer, with the feeling of humility, the content of the feeling becomes transformed into intuitive vision. Now a path leading to supersensible regions may be found by devoting oneself to such feelings one by one; but for the man of to-day, bound by the ordinary circumstances of life, this is not easily carried out. Solitude, retirement from the life of the present day, is almost indispensable. For the impressions created by everyday life disturb the soul, especially at the beginning, in its work of development through absorption in certain feelings. It is on the contrary possible to pursue the path of knowledge described in this book in every situation of present-day life.

OBSERVATION OF SPECIAL EVENTS AND BEINGS IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

The question may be asked whether inner concentration and the other means described for the attainment of supersensual knowledge permit us

to observe only in a general way what happens between death and a new birth or other spiritual events; or whether they furnish the possibility of observing quite definite events and beings, as, for example, any given deceased person. To this we must answer that a man who gains the capacity for seeing in the spiritual world by the methods explained, can also perceive particular events which occur there; he acquires the power to put himself into communication with individuals living in the spiritual world between death and a new birth. It must be observed, however, that in an occult sense this ought to take place only after the proper training required for supersensible knowledge has been undergone. For not until then is it possible to distinguish between illusion and reality, as regards certain events and beings. A man who tries to observe particular cases without due instruction may fall a victim to innumerable deceptions. The training which leads to observation in higher worlds of what has been described, also leads to the ability to trace the post-mortem life of a special individual, after death has supervened, and no less does it lead to the observation and comprehension of all psychospiritual beings who, from the invisible worlds, work upon those which are manifest. Correct observation of individual cases is only possible, however, on the basis of a knowledge of the

universal sublime facts of the spiritual world,— facts regarding the world and humanity which concern every human being. The desire for the one without the other leads astray.

AUTHOR'S REMARKS

IN placing a book such as this in the hands of the public, the writer must calmly anticipate regarding his work every kind of criticism which is likely to arise in the present day. A reader, for instance, whose opinions are based upon the results of scientific research, after noting certain statements here made touching these things, may pronounce the following judgment: "It is astounding that such statements should be possible in our time. The most elementary conceptions of natural science are distorted in such a manner as to denote a positively inconceivable ignorance of even the rudiments of science. The author uses such terms, for instance, as 'heat' in a way that would lead one to infer that he had let the entire wave of modern thought on the subject of physics sweep past him unperceived. Any one familiar with the mere elements of this science would show him that not even the merest diletante could have made these statements, and they can only be dismissed as the outcome of rank ignorance."

This and many a similar verdict might be pronounced, and we can picture our reader, after the perusal of a page or two, laying the book aside,—

smiling or indignant, according to his temperament,—and reflecting on the singular growths which a perverse tendency of thought may put forth in our time. So thinking, he will lay this volume aside, with his collection of similar freaks of the brain. What, however, would the author say should such opinions come to his knowledge? Would not he, from his point of view, also set the critic down as incapable of judgment or, at least, as one who has not chosen to bring his good will to bear in forming an intelligent opinion? To this the answer is most emphatically—No! In no sense whatever does the author feel this, for he can easily conceive of his critic as being not only a highly intelligent man, but also a trained scientist, and one whose opinions are the result of conscientious thought. For the author of this book is able to enter into the feelings of such a person and to understand the reasons which have led him to form these conclusions.

Now, before going any further, it is necessary, in order to comprehend what the author really means, to do here what seems to himself generally out of place, but for which there is urgent cause as regards this book, namely, to introduce certain personal data. Of course, nothing will be put forward in this connection but what concerns his determination to write this very book. What is said in it could not be justified if it bore merely a personal character. A book of this kind is

bound to proffer views to which any person may attain, and these views must be presented in such a way as to suggest no shade of the personal element, as far, that is to say, as such a thing is possible.

It is therefore not in this sense that the personal note is sounded. It will be struck only where it may assist the writer to point out how, in spite of being able thoroughly to enter into the "reason" of such a dictum as the one quoted above, he could still write this book.

It is true there is one method which would have made the introduction of the personal element unnecessary—this would have been to specify in detail all those particulars which would show that the statements here made are in agreement with the progress of modern science. This course would, however, have necessitated the writing of many volumes, and as such a task is at present out of the question, the writer feels it necessary to state the personal reasons which he believes justify him in thinking such an agreement thoroughly possible and satisfactory. Were he not in a position to make the following explanations, he would most certainly never have gone so far as to publish such statements as those referring to heat processes.

Some thirty years ago the writer had the opportunity of taking a course of physics in its various branches. At that time the central point of

interest in the sphere of heat phenomena was the promulgation of the so-called "Mechanical Theory of Heat," and it happened that this theory so particularly engrossed the writer's attention that the historical development of the various interpretations associated with the names of Julius Robert Mayer, Helmholtz, Joule, Clausius, and others, formed the subject of his continuous study. During that period of concentrated work he laid those foundations which have enabled him to follow all the actual advances since made with regard to the theory of physical heat, without experiencing any difficulty in penetrating into that which science is achieving in this department. Had he been obliged to confess himself unable to do this, the writer would have had good reason for leaving unsaid and unwritten much that has been brought forward in this book.

He has made it a matter of conscience, when writing or speaking on occult science, to deal only with matters on which he could also report, in what seemed an adequate manner, the views held by modern science. In this he does not in any wise challenge the whole world to do likewise. Any one may feel a call to communicate or to publish whatsoever his judgment, his sense of truth, and his feelings may prompt him to, even if he is ignorant of the attitude taken by contemporary science in the matter. The writer wishes to indicate merely that he holds to the pronouncements he

has made. For instance, he would never have written those few sentences on the human glandular system, nor those regarding man's nervous system, contained in this volume, were he not in a position to discuss both subjects in the terms used by the modern scientist, when speaking of the glandular and nervous systems from the standpoint of science.

In spite of its being possible to think that a person discussing heat in the way it has here been done, knows nothing of the elements of modern physics, the writer yet feels justified, *because* of his being thoroughly acquainted with present-day research, and because, were he not so, he would have left the subject alone. He knows that such utterances may be ascribed to want of modesty, but it is necessary to declare his true motives, lest they should be confounded with others of a very different nature, a result infinitely worse than a verdict of mere vanity.

A criticism from the philosophical point of view is also possible, and a philosopher might suspect that the author had been asleep while recent labours in the field of epistemology were in progress. "Had he never heard of the existence of a man called Kant?" this philosopher might ask, "and did he not know that according to this man it was simply inadmissible, from a philosophic point of view, to put forward such statements?" and so on, while in conclusion he might remark

that stuff of so uncritical, childish, and unprofessional a nature should not be tolerated among philosophers, and that any further investigation would be a waste of time. But here again, for reasons already advanced and at the risk of being again misinterpreted, the writer would fain introduce certain personal experiences.

His studies of Kant date from his sixteenth year, and he really believes he is now capable of criticizing quite objectively, from the Kantian point of view, everything that has been put forward in this book. On this account, too, he might have left this book unwritten were he not fully aware of what moves a philosopher to pass the verdict of "childishness" whenever the critical standard of the day is applied. Yet one may actually know that in the Kantian sense the limits of possible knowledge are here exceeded: one may know in what way Herbart (who never arrived at an "arrangement of ideas") would discover his "naïve realism." One may even know the degree to which the modern pragmatism of James and Schiller and others would find the bounds of "true presentments" transgressed—those presentments which we are able to make our own, to vindicate, enforce, and to verify.

We may know all these things and yet, for this very reason, feel justified in holding the views here presented. The writer has dealt with the tendencies of philosophic thought in his works:

Erkenntnistheorie der Goetheschen Weltanschauung; Wahrheit und Wissenschaft; Philosophie der Freiheit; Goethes Weltanschauung, and Welt- und Lebensanschauungen im neunzehnten Jahrhundert.

Many other criticisms might be suggested. Any one who had read some of the writer's earlier works: *Lebens- und Weltanschauungen im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, for instance, or a smaller work on *Haeckel and his Opponents*, might think it incredible that one and the same man could have written those books and also not only that entitled *Theosophy* but the one now under discussion. "How," he might ask, "can a man throw himself into the breach for Haeckel, and then, turning round, discredit every sound theory concerning monism that is the outcome of Haeckel's researches?" He might understand the author of this book attacking Haeckel "with fire and sword"; but it passes the limits of comprehension that, besides defending him, he should actually have dedicated "*Welt- und Lebensanschauungen im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*" to him. Haeckel, it might be thought, would have emphatically declined the dedication had he known that the author was shortly to produce such stuff as *An Outline of Occult Science*, with all its unwieldy dualism.

The writer of this book is of opinion that one may very well understand Haeckel without holding the belief that he can be understood only when everything is thought to be nonsense which

is not directly traceable to Haeckel's own conceptions and assumptions. The writer is further of opinion that attacking Haeckel violently will hardly conduce to the understanding of him; that this can only be done, in fact, after a careful investigation of all he has done for science. Least of all does he hold those opponents of Haeckel to be in the right, against whom he has in his book, *Haeckel and his Opponents*, sought to defend the great naturalist; for surely, the fact of his having far outstripped Haeckel's hypotheses, by placing the spiritual conception of the world side by side with the merely natural one conceived by Haeckel, need be no reason for supposing him to be of one mind with the latter's opponents. Any one taking the trouble to look at the matter in the right light must see that the writer's recent books are in perfect accord with those of an earlier date.

But the author can also imagine some one, judging from the more general point of view, condemning his book as the outpouring of an "imagination run wild," or as "romantic workings of the brain." Yet all that can be said in this respect is contained in the book itself, and it is explicitly shown that sane and earnest thought not only can but *must* be the touchstone of all the facts presented. Only one who submits what is here advanced to logical and adequate examination, such as is applied to the

facts of natural science, will be in a position to decide for himself how much reason has to say in the matter.

After saying this much about those who may at first be inclined to take exception to this work, we may perhaps be permitted to address a few words to those on whose sympathetic attention we can rely. These will find all broad essentials contained in the first chapter, "Concerning the Nature of Occult Science." A word, however, must here be added. Although this book deals with investigations carried beyond the confines of intelligence limited to the world of the senses, yet nothing has been put forward save what can be grasped by any person possessed of unprejudiced reasoning powers backed by a healthy sense of truth, and who is at the same time willing to turn these gifts to the best account; and the writer emphatically wishes it to be understood that he hopes to appeal to readers who will not be content with merely accepting on "blind faith" the matters presented, but who will take the trouble to test them by the light of their own understanding and by the experiences of their own lives. Above all, he desires *cautious* readers, who will allow themselves to be convinced only by what can be logically justified. The writer is well aware that his work would be worth nothing were its value to rest on blind belief; it is valuable only in the degree to which it can be justified by unbiassed reason. It is

the easiest thing for "blind faith" to confound folly and superstition with truth, and doubtless many who have been content to accept the supersensual on mere faith will be inclined to think that this book makes too great a demand on their powers of thought. It is not a question of merely making certain communications, but rather of presenting them in a manner consistent with a conscientious view of the corresponding plane of life; for this is the plane upon which the loftiest matters are often handled with unscrupulous charlatanism, and where knowledge and superstition come into such close contact as to be liable to be confused one with the other.

Any one acquainted with supersensual research will, on reading this book, be able to see that the writer has sought to define sharply the boundary line between what it is permitted to communicate now from the sphere of supersensual knowledge, and what is to be given out, at a later time, or at all events in a different form from the present.

RUDOLF STEINER

December, 1909

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