

THE DEED OF CHRIST AND THE OPPOSING SPIRITUAL POWERS

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I. The Deed of Christ and the Opposing Spiritual Powers. Lucifer, Ahriman, Asuras

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Today we shall concern ourselves with the question: What does modern man really possess in spiritual science? The answer to this question will be based on many things that have come to our knowledge in the course of lectures, especially those given last winter. Spiritual science may appear, at first, to be one conception of the world among the many others now existing. It may be argued: The riddles of existence are there; people endeavor with every possible means at their disposal, religious or scientific, to answer these riddles of existence in an effort to satisfy, as it is said, their eagerness and desire for knowledge. Spiritual science may well be considered just another philosophy of life — whether calling itself materialism, monism, animism, idealism, realism, or what you will. It may be represented as something that endeavors to satisfy the desire for knowledge on a par with other modern world-conceptions. But this is not correct. In what man acquires through spiritual science he has something of positive, continuous value in life, something that not only satisfies his thinking, his thirst for knowledge, but is a real and potent factor in life itself. To understand this we must look far afield and consider the evolutionary course of mankind from a particular point of view.

We have often looked back to the times preceding the great Atlantean flood, to the times when our forefathers, that is to say our own souls in the bodies of those forefathers, lived on the ancient continent of Atlantis between Europe, Africa and America. We have also looked still further back, to the Lemurian epoch, when the souls of men incarnated at the present time were at a much lower stage of existence. We shall now speak again of this epoch, reminding ourselves, to begin with, of the following: Man has attained the present stage of his life of feeling, his life of will, his intelligence, nay even his form, because higher spiritual Beings in the cosmos have also been at work in earth-existence. We have spoken of these Beings as the "Thrones", the "Spirits of Wisdom", the "Spirits of Movement", the "Spirits of Form", the "Spirits of Personality", and so forth.

They are the great builders and architects of existence who have led the human race onward step by step to its present stage. But we must bring clearly before our minds today that Spirits and Beings other than those who help human evolution forward have also intervened; there are spiritual Beings who oppose the progressive Powers. And for every epoch — Lemurian, Atlantean, Post-Atlantean — it is possible to indicate which particular spiritual Beings bring the "hindrances", which spiritual Beings are the opponents of those whose only aim is the progress of humanity.

In the Lemurian epoch — the first that concerns us to-day — it was the *Luciferic Beings* who intervened in man's evolution, in opposition to the Powers who at that time were striving to help him forward. In the Atlantean epoch, the Spirits opposing the progressive Powers were the Spirits of "Ahriman" or "Mephistopheles". The Ahrimanic or Mephistophelean Spirits — to give the precise names — are those known in medieval times as the Spirits of "Satan" — who must not be confused with "Lucifer".

In our own epoch, as time goes on, other spiritual Beings of whom we shall speak later, will stand as hindrances in the path of the progressive Spirits. We will ask ourselves now: What did the Luciferic Spirits actually achieve in the ancient Lemurian epoch?

These things will be considered to-day from a particular point of view. Of what domain did the Luciferic Spirits lay hold during the Lemurian epoch? The best way to understand this is to cast our minds back over the course taken by human evolution.

You know that on Old Saturn the Thrones poured out their own substance to lay the first foundation of the human physical body. On Old Sun the Spirits of Wisdom imbued man with the ether- or life-body. And on the Earth the Spirits of Form endowed him with the 'I', the ego, in order that by realizing himself as distinct from his environment he might become an independent being. But even if through the deed of the Spirits of Form he had become independent *vis-à-vis* the external world surrounding him on earth, he would never have become independent of the Spirits of Form themselves; he would have remained dependent on them, he would have been directed by them as on leading-strings. That this did not happen was due to something which had, in a certain sense, a beneficial effect, namely the fact that in the Lemurian epoch the Luciferic Beings set themselves in opposition to the Spirits of Form. It was these Luciferic Beings who gave man the prospect of freedom — but therewith the possibility of evil-doing, of succumbing to passion and desire in the world of sense. Where did these Luciferic Beings actually take hold? They took hold of what had been instilled into man as his innermost member at that time — the astral body. They established their footing in the human astral body and took possession of it. Had it not been for the coming of the Luciferic Beings this astral body would have remained in the sole possession of the Spirits of Form. They would have instilled into this astral body the forces which give man his human countenance, making him into an image of the Gods, namely, of the Spirits of Form. All this man would have come to be; but in his life through all eternity he would have remained dependent upon the Spirits of Form.

The Luciferic Beings had crept, as it were, into man's astral body, so that Beings of two kinds were now working in it: the Beings who bring man forward and the Beings who, while obstructing this constant impulse, had at the same time established the foundations of his independence. Had the luciferic Beings not approached, man would have remained in a state of innocence and purity in his astral body. No passions inciting him to crave for what is to be found only on earth would have arisen in him. The passions, urges and desires of man were densified, debased, as it were, by the Luciferic Beings. Had they not approached, man would have retained a perpetual longing for his heavenly home, for the realms of spirit whence he has descended. He would have taken no delight in what surrounds him on the earth; earthly impressions would have aroused no interest in him. It was through the Luciferic Spirits that he came to have this interest, to crave for the impressions of the earth. These Spirits impelled him into the earthly sphere by pervading his innermost member, his astral body. Why, then, was it that man did not fall away entirely at that time from the Spirits of Form or from the higher spiritual realms as a whole? Why was it that in his interests and desires he did not succumb wholly to the world of sense?

It was because the Spirits who lead humanity forward took counter measures; they inculcated into the being of man what would otherwise not have been his lot, namely, illness, suffering and pain. That was the necessary counterweight to the deeds of the Luciferic Spirits.

The Luciferic Spirits gave man material desires; as their countermeasures the higher Beings introduced illness and suffering as the consequences of material desires and interests, to the end that he should not utterly succumb to this world of sense. And so there is exactly as much suffering and pain in the world as there is interest only in the physical and the material. The scales are held in perfect balance; the one does not outweigh the other — so many passions and desires on the one side, so much illness and pain on the other. This was the effect of the mutual activities of the Luciferic Spirits and the Spirits of Form in the Lemurian epoch. Had the Luciferic Spirits not approached, man would not have descended into the earthly realm as soon as he actually did. His passion and craving for the world of sense also brought it about that his eyes were opened and he was able to gaze at the surrounding field of material existence earlier than would otherwise have been the case. If evolution had proceeded uninterruptedly along the course intended by the progressive Spirits, man would have had sight of the surrounding world only from the middle of the Atlantean epoch onwards. But then he would have seen it *spiritually*, not as he sees it to-day; he would have seen it as the direct expression of spiritual beings. Because man came prematurely into the earthly sphere, forced downwards by his earthly interests and desires, conditions were different from what they would otherwise have been in the middle of the Atlantean epoch.

The result was that the Ahrimanic Spirits — “Mephistophelean Spirits” as it is equally correct to call them — mingled in what man was able to see and apprehend; thus he fell into error, into what, for the first time, can correctly be called “conscious sin”. The host of Ahrimanic Spirits has worked upon man since the middle of the Atlantean epoch onwards. To what did these Ahrimanic Spirits entice him? They enticed him into regarding everything in his environment as material, with the result that he does not see *through* this material world to its true, spiritual foundations. Were man to have perceived the Spiritual in every stone, in every plant, in every animal, he would never have fallen into error and therewith into evil; if the progressive Spirits alone had worked upon him he would have been protected from those illusions to which he must always fall a prey when he bases himself solely upon the manifestations of the world of sense. How did those spiritual Beings who desire to further man's progress act in order to combat this corruption, error and illusion arising from the material world? They saw to it — the process was of course slow and very gradual — that man was actually lifted away from the material world as such; this enabled him to shoulder and work out his *karma*. Whereas, therefore, the Beings upon whom it fell to rectify the enticement of the Luciferic Beings brought into the world suffering, pain and what is connected with them, namely death, the Beings whose task it was to rectify the outcome of error concerning the sense-world, made it possible for man, through his karma, eventually to blot out all the error, all the evil he has wrought in the world. For what would have happened if he had become the prey of evil and error? Little by little he would have become one with the evil; no progress would have been possible for him. For with every error, every lie, every illusion, we cast an obstacle in the way of progress. We should fall back in our progress to exactly the same extent to which we had cast obstacles in our path through sin and error, if we were not in a position to rectify them; in other words, we could not reach man's true goal. It would be impossible to attain this goal if the counter-forces, the forces of karma, were not in operation.

Suppose that in some life you commit a wrong. If this wrong were to become firmly fixed in your life it would mean nothing less than that you would lose the step forward which you would have taken had you not committed the wrong; with every wrong, a step would be lost — enough steps to correspond exactly with the wrongs committed. If the possibility of surmounting error had not been given, man must ultimately have been submerged by it. But the blessing of karma was bestowed. What does this blessing mean for man? Is karma something at which to shudder, something to dread? No, indeed! Karma is a power for which man should be thankful. For karma says to us: If you have committed a wrong, remember that “God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap”. An error demands that you shall right it; then, having expunged it from your karma you can again take a step forward!

Without karma, no progress would be possible. Karma is a blessing that has been vouchsafed to us, inasmuch as it obliges us to rectify every error, to re-achieve the steps that thrust us back.

Karma was thus the indirect consequence of the deeds of Ahriman. And now let us go further. In our days we are moving towards the epoch when other Beings will draw near to man — Beings who in the future before us will intrude more and more deeply into human evolution. Just as the Luciferic Spirits intervened in the Lemurian and the Ahrimanic Spirits in the Atlantean epoch, so our epoch too will see the intrusion of Beings. Let us be clear about the nature of these Beings.

Of the Beings who intervened during the Lemurian epoch we must say: They entrenched themselves in the astral body of man, drew his interests, impulses and desires down into the earthly sphere. Where — to speak more precisely — did these Luciferic Beings entrench themselves?

You can only understand this by taking as a basis what is set forth in my book *Theosophy*. There it is shown that the following members of man's being must be distinguished: first, his physical body; then his ether or life-body and his astral body — or as I have called it in that book, the sentient body, or soul-body.

These are the three members with which man was endowed *before* his earthly existence. The foundation of the physical body was laid on Old Saturn, the ether-body on the Old Sun, the soul or sentient body on the Old Moon. On the Earth was added the sentient soul — which is actually a transformation, an elaboration carried out unconsciously, of the sentient body. Lucifer anchored himself in the sentient soul; and there he remains. Through the unconscious transformation of the ether-body, the intellectual soul came into being, a more detailed description of which is contained in the book entitled *The Education of the Child*. It was in this second soul-member, the intellectual soul — the transformed part of the ether-body — that Ahriman established his footing. From there he lures man to false conceptions and judgments of material things, leads him to error, to sin, to lying — to everything that originates in the intellectual or mind soul. In every illusion that matter is the sole reality, we must perceive the whispered promptings of Ahriman, of Mephistopheles. Thirdly, there is the consciousness soul (spiritual soul), arising from an unconscious transformation of the physical body. You will remember how this transformation came about. Towards the end of the Atlantean epoch, the etheric body corresponding to the head came right into the physical head and gradually brought about selfconsciousness in the physical body. Fundamentally speaking, man is still working at this unconscious transformation of the physical body, at the development of the consciousness soul. *And in the age now, approaching, those spiritual Beings known as the Asuras* ¹ will creep into the consciousness soul and therewith into the human 'I' or ego — for the 'I' lights up in the consciousness soul. The Asuras will generate evil with a far mightier force than was wielded by the Satanic powers in the Atlantean epoch or by the Luciferic Spirits in the Lemurian epoch.

In the course of the Earth-period man will cast away all the evil brought to him by the Luciferic Spirits together with the blessing of freedom. The evil brought by the Ahrimanic Spirits can be shed in the course of karma. But the evil brought by the Asuric powers cannot be expunged in this way. Whereas the good Spirits instituted pain and suffering, illness and death in order that despite the possibility of evil, man's evolution may still advance, whereas the good Spirits made possible the working of karma to the end that the Ahrimanic powers might be resisted and the evil made good, it will not be so easy to counter the Asuric powers as earth-existence takes its course. For these Asuric Spirits will prompt what has been seized hold of by them, namely the very core of man's being, the consciousness soul together with the 'I', to unite with earthly materiality. Fragment after fragment will be torn out of the 'I', and in the same measure in which the Asuric Spirits establish themselves in the consciousness soul, man must leave parts of his existence behind on the earth. What thus becomes the prey of the Asuric powers will be irretrievably lost. Not that the whole man need become their victim — but parts of his spirit will be torn away by the Asuric powers. These Asuric powers are heralded to-day by the prevailing tendency to live wholly in the material world and to be oblivious of the reality of spiritual beings and spiritual worlds. True, the Asuric powers corrupt man to-day in a way that is more theoretical than actual. To-day they deceive him by various means into thinking that his 'I' is a product of the physical world only; they hue him to a kind of theoretic materialism. But as time goes on — and the premonitory signs of this are the dissolute, sensuous passions that are becoming increasingly prevalent on earth — they will blind man's vision of the spiritual Beings and spiritual Powers. Man will know nothing nor desire to know anything of a spiritual world. More and more he will not only teach that the highest moral ideals of humanity are merely sublimations of animal impulses, that human thinking is but a transformation of a faculty also possessed by the animals, that man is akin to the animal in respect of his form and moreover in his whole being descends from the animal — but he will take this view in all earnestness and order his life in accordance with it.

Man does not as yet entirely base his life on the principle that his true being descends from the animal. But this view of existence will inevitably arise, with the result that men will also live like animals, will sink into animal impulses, animal passions. And in many things that need not be further characterized here, many things that in the great cities come to expression in orgies of dissolute sensuality, we can already perceive the lurid, hellish glare of the Spirits we call the Asuras.

Once again let us look back. We have said that suffering and pain, nay even death, were brought by the Spirits who are intent upon man's progress. The words of the Bible are unambiguous: "In travail shalt thou bear thy children!" Death has come into the world. Death was decreed for man by the Powers opposing the Luciferic Spirits. From whom came the gift of karma itself, who made karma possible for man? — To understand what is here being said you must discard all earthly, pedantic notions of time. Earthly notions of time give rise to the belief that what has once happened here or there will have an effect only upon what comes afterwards. But in the spiritual world it is the case that what comes to pass reveals itself in its effect, *beforehand*; in its effect it is already there, in advance. Whence comes the blessing of karma? Whence has there arisen in our earth-evolution this blessing of karma? From a Power none other than *Christ*. Although Christ appeared only later, He was always present in the spiritual sphere of the earth. Already in the ancient Oracles of Atlantis, the priests of those Oracles spoke of the "Spirit of the Sun", of Christ. In the old Indian epoch of civilization the Holy Rishis spoke of "Vishva Karman"; Zarathustra in ancient Persia spoke of "Ahura Mazdao", Hermes of "Osiris"; and Moses spoke of the Power which, being eternal, brings about the harmonization of the temporal and natural, the Power living in the "Ehjah asher Ehjah" (I am the I AM) as the harbinger of Christ. All spoke of the Christ; but where was He to be found in those ancient times? In the realm to which the eye of spirit alone can penetrate, in the spiritual world. In the spiritual world He was always to be found, working in and from the spiritual world. It is He Who even before man appeared on earth, sent down the possibility of karma. Then He came Himself to the earth, and we know what this has meant for man. We have described what was wrought by Him in the earthly sphere, we have spoken of the significance of the Event of Golgotha and of its effect also upon those who at that time were in the spiritual world, not incarnate in earthly bodies. We know that at the moment on Golgotha when the Blood flowed from the wounds, the Christ-Spirit appeared in the underworld, flooding the whole world of spirit with radiance and light; we have said that the appearance of Christ on the earth is the event of supreme importance also for the world through which man passes between death and a new birth. ²

The impulse going forth from Christ is in the fullest sense *reality*. We need but ask ourselves what would have become of the earth had Christ not appeared. Precisely from the opposite picture — an earth without Christ — you can apprehend the significance of Christ's coming. Let us suppose that Christ had not come, that the Mystery of Golgotha had not taken place.

Before Christ's Coming, the condition in the spiritual world of human souls who were the most progressed, who had acquired the deepest interest for earthly life, was truly expressed by the saying of the Greeks: Better it is to be a beggar in the upper world than a king in the realm of the Shades. For before the Event of Golgotha the souls in the spiritual world felt completely isolated, enveloped in darkness. The spiritual world in all its gleaming clarity was not transparent to those who entered it through the portal of death. Each one felt isolated, thrust back into himself as though a wall were between himself and every other soul. And this feeling of isolation would have become more and more intense. Man would have hardened within the ego, would have been thrown back into himself, nor could he have found any bridge to the others. And egoism, already intense, would have increased beyond all telling with every new incarnation. Earth-existence would more and more have made men into utter egoists. There would have been no prospect of brotherhood on the earth or of inner harmony among souls; for with every journey through the spiritual world, stronger influence would have penetrated the ego. That is what would have happened to an earth without Christ. That the way from soul to soul will be found again, that it has been made possible for the mighty force of brotherhood to pour over all humanity — this is due to Christ's Coming, to the Event of Golgotha. Therefore Christ is the Power who has enabled man to turn earth-existence ultimately to good account, in other words to give karma its true configuration — for karma must be worked out on the *earth*. That man finds in himself the force to profit by his karma in physical existence, that advancing evolution is possible for him — all this he owes to the working of the Christ Event, to the presence of Christ in the earthly realm.

And so we see many diverse forces and beings working together in the evolution of humanity. Had Christ not come upon the earth, man would have been engulfed in error, because having hardened within himself he would have become as it were a globe on its own, knowing nothing of other beings, entirely self-enclosed, driven into that condition by error and sin.

Christ is verily the Light which leads out of error and sin, the Light which enables man to find the way upwards. And now let us ask ourselves: What was it that was lost to man in that he descended from the spiritual world, was ensnared in desires and passions under the influence of Lucifer, and then, under Ahriman's influence, in error, illusion and lying in the earthly world? — He lost direct vision of the spiritual world, he lost understanding of the spiritual world.

What, then, must he regain? He must regain full understanding of the spiritual world. As a self-conscious being, man can grasp the import of Christ's Deed only by realizing with full clarity of understanding, the significance of Christ. The Christ-Power is there in very truth — not brought by man, for the Christ-Power was brought to the earth by none other than Christ Himself. Karma has come into humanity through Christ. But now, with self-consciousness, man must learn to know Christ in His real nature and His connection with the whole universe. Only so can man work in the true sense as an 'I'. What then, does he actually achieve when, after Christ's appearance, he does not merely rest satisfied with letting Christ's power work upon him unconsciously, with saying: I am content with the knowledge that Christ came to the earth; He will redeem me and ensure my progress! — but when he says: I am resolved to know what Christ is in all reality, how He descended; I am resolved to participate through my own spirit in Christ's Deed! — what does man achieve thereby?

Recall to your minds that because the Luciferic Spirits slipped into his astral body, man has come down into the world of sense, thereby falling prey to the evil but also acquiring the possibility of self-conscious freedom. Lucifer is in very truth present in the being of man, has drawn him down to the earth, has ensnared him in earthly existence; inasmuch as the passions and desires contained in the astral body had first been led by Lucifer into the earthly realm, Ahriman too was able to invade the astral body — in the intellectual soul. Christ appeared, and with Him the force which can bear man upwards again into the spiritual world. But now, if he so wills, man can come to know Christ, he can gather all wisdom to this end. What does he achieve thereby? Something of untold moment! When a man knows Christ, when he absorbs the wisdom which begets insight into what Christ truly is, then he redeems himself *and* the Luciferic Beings through this knowledge of Christ. Were man merely to say: I am content with the fact that Christ appeared and to allow myself to be redeemed by Him unconsciously — then he would contribute nothing to the redemption of the Luciferic Beings. These Luciferic Beings who have brought man freedom, also make it possible for him, if he so wills, to turn it to account in order to understand Christ. Then the Luciferic Spirits are cleansed and purified in the fire of Christianity and the wrong done to the earth by them is changed into blessing. Freedom has been attained; but it will also be carried into the spiritual sphere as a blessing. That man is capable of this, that he is capable of understanding Christ, that Lucifer, resurrected in a new form, can unite with Christ as the good Spirit — this, as prophecy still, was told by Christ Himself to those around Him, when He said: "Ye shall be illumined by the new Spirit, by the Holy Spirit!" This "Holy Spirit" is none other than the Spirit through whom man can apprehend what Christ has wrought. Christ desired not merely to work, but also to be apprehended, to be understood. Therefore the sending of the Spirit by whom men are inspired, the sending of the "Holy spirit", is implicit in Christianity.

In the spiritual sense, Whitsuntide belongs inseparably to Easter. This "Holy Spirit" is none other than the Lucifer-Spirit, resurrected now in higher, purer glory — the Spirit of independent understanding, wisdom-inwoven. Christ Himself foretold that this Spirit would come to men after Him, and in the light of this Spirit their labors must proceed. What is it that works onward in the light of this Spirit? The world-stream of spiritual science, if rightly conceived! What is this spiritual science? It is the wisdom of the Spirit, the wisdom that lifts into the full light of consciousness that in Christianity which would otherwise remain in the unconscious. The torch of the resurrected Lucifer, of the Lucifer now *transformed into the good*, blazons the way for Christ. Lucifer is the *bearer* of the Light — Christ *is* the Light! As the word itself denotes, Lucifer is the "Bearer of the Light". That is what the spiritual scientific movement should be, that is implicit in it. Those who know that the progress of mankind depends upon living apprehension of the mighty Event of Golgotha are they who as the "Masters of Wisdom and of the Harmony of Feelings" are united in the great Guiding Lodge of mankind. And as once the "tongues of fire" hovered down as a living symbol upon the company of the apostles, so does the "Holy Spirit" announced by Christ Himself reign as the Light over the Lodge of the Twelve. The Thirteenth is the Leader of the Lodge of the Twelve. The "Holy Spirit" is the mighty Teacher of those we name the "Masters of Wisdom and of the Harmony of Feelings". It is through them that his voice and his wisdom flow down to mankind in this or that stream upon the earth. The treasures of wisdom gathered together by the spiritual scientific movement in order to understand the universe and the Spirits therein, how through the "Holy Spirit" into the Lodge of the Twelve; and that is what will ultimately lead mankind step by step to free, self-conscious understanding of Christ and of the Event of Golgotha. Thus to 'cultivate' spiritual science means to understand that the Spirit has been sent into the world by Christ; the pursuit of spiritual science is implicit in true Christianity. This will become more and more evident to men; and then they will realize that in spiritual science they have a potent asset in their lives. Men owe to spiritual science the consciousness which dawns in them by degrees, that Christ is the Spirit Who fills the world with light. And the consequence will be that here on this earthly globe, in the physical world itself, men will make progress in their moral life, in their life of will, in their intellectual life. Through physical life itself the world will be spiritualized in ever-increasing measure. Men will grow in goodness, strength and wisdom and will gaze with ever deepening vision into the foundations and origins of existence. They will bear with them into the super-sensible life the fruits acquired in this physical life, and ever and again bring these fruits back from the super-sensible life into a new incarnation.

Thus the earth will more and more become the expression of its Spirit, of the Christ-Spirit. Spiritual science will be understood in the light of the world's foundations, apprehended as a real and active power. In various respects to-day mankind is near to losing the Spirit altogether. In the recent public lecture ³ it was said that men suffer to-day under the fear of heredity. The fear of the burden of heredity is the direct offspring of our materialistic age. But is it enough if a man simply says to himself that he need not have this fear? — By no means does that suffice. A man who does not concern himself with the spiritual world, who does not instill into his soul what can flow from spiritual science, is subject to the forces of physical heredity. Only by steeping his whole being in what spiritual science can communicate to him does he gain mastery over the forces of heredity, regards it as a factor of no essential significance and becomes the victor of everything that the powers of hindrance place in his way in the external world. It is not by arguing or philosophizing it away, or by contending: Spirit exists! — that man brings the life of the senses under his command, but by permeating himself with the Spirit, by absorbing the Spirit, by having the will to acquire intimate knowledge of the Spirit. Then spiritual science will make men healthier even in the physical world; for spiritual science is itself a therapy that brings vigor and health. And the essential power of spiritual science will become still more evident to us when we consider what becomes of the human being when he passes through the gate of death. The modern mind finds great difficulty here.

Man thinks to himself: Why need I trouble about what happens in the spiritual world? When I die I go into the spiritual world in any case and then I shall see and hear what goes on there! In endless variations one hears this easy-going way of talking: Why should I trouble about the spiritual before I die? When the time comes I shall see what there is to see. My relationship to the spiritual world will not be altered in the slightest, no matter whether I do or do not concern myself with it. — But indeed this is not so! A man who thinks in such a way will enter a world of darkness and gloom, unable to make very much of what is said in my book *Theosophy* about the spiritual worlds. For it is only by allying himself in spirit and soul with the spiritual world during life in the physical world that man can acquire the faculty of perception in the spiritual world; the preparation must be made in his life here on earth. The spiritual world is there in very truth — the faculty of being able to see in that world must be acquired on the earth; otherwise there is blindness in the spiritual world.

Spiritual science is therefore the power which alone makes it possible for man to enter the spiritual world with consciousness. Had Christ not appeared in the physical world, man would have gone under in that world, could not have found entry to the spiritual world. But Christ lifts him into the spiritual world in such a way that he can see and be conscious there. This depends upon his knowledge of how to unite his being with the Spirit sent by Christ; failing that knowledge, he remains unconscious. Man has to win his immortality through his own efforts, for an unconscious immortality is no immortality. A beautiful saying of Meister Eckhardt is: "What does it profit a man to be a king if he knows it not," — What he meant was: Of what use is the spiritual world to a man if he does not know what the spiritual worlds are in reality? The capacity for seeing the spiritual world can be acquired only in the physical world. Those who ask: Why was it necessary for man to descend at all into the physical world? do well to take this to heart. — Man descended in order to acquire vision of the spiritual world. He would have remained blind to the spiritual world had he not descended and attained the self-conscious manhood which enables him to return to the spiritual world now lying in radiance and light before his soul.

Spiritual science is therefore not merely a "conception of the world" in the accepted sense but something without which — even in the immortal part of his being — man can know nothing about the worlds of immortality. Spiritual science is an active power, permeating the soul as reality. And in that you are present here in the pursuit of spiritual science, you are not only gathering knowledge but you are growing into something you would otherwise not have become. That is the difference between spiritual science and other world-conceptions. The latter are rooted in *knowledge*; spiritual science is rooted in *being*.

Rightly conceived, these things will make us say to ourselves: With this illumination, an inner, fundamental connection is revealed between Christ, the Spirit, and spiritual science. In face of this connection all the superficial statements made to-day to the effect that a Western trend is being set up in opposition to an Eastern trend of occultism fall to the ground. There can be no question of any such opposition. There are not two occultisms, there is only one occultism; and there is no opposition between eastern and western Theosophy. There is only *one* truth. And what is our reply to be when we are asked: If eastern occultism is the same as western occultism, why is it that in eastern occultism, Christ is not acknowledged? The right reply is that it is not for us to give the answer; that obligation does not rest upon us, for we fully acknowledge eastern occultism. If asked whether we acknowledge what eastern occultism says about Brahma, about the Buddha, we shall answer: Most certainly we acknowledge it. We understand what is meant when we are told that the Buddha attained his exalted rank in this or that way. We deny no single one of the eastern truths; in so far as they are positive truths we acknowledge them all. But shall this prevent us from acknowledging *as well*, what goes yet further? No indeed! We acknowledge what is said by eastern occultism, but that does not prevent us from acknowledging, too, the western truths.

When people allege that it is an inferior way of thinking on the part of orientalists to say that the Buddha died from eating too much pork — as these learned gentlemen assert — and it is explained that this actually has a deep meaning, namely that the Buddha imparted to those immediately around him too much of the esoteric wisdom, so that this over-abundance caused the onset of a kind of karma — then we agree that it is so; we say: certainly there lie behind it the deeper esoteric truths as stated by you who are eastern esotericists! — But when the statement that the Apocalypse was revealed to St. John on Patmos amid thunder and lightning is held to be unintelligible, ⁴ then our answer will be: everyone who is aware of what is really meant, knows that it is a truth! We do not refute what is said about the Buddha but we cannot agree when the validity of the other statement (concerning the Apocalypse) is denied. We do not contest the assertion that the astral body of the Buddha was preserved and was later incorporated in Shankaracharya. But that does not prevent us from teaching that the astral body of Jesus of Nazareth was preserved and in multiple replicas was incorporated in various individuals dedicated to Christianity, like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Elizabeth of Thüringen. We deny no single truth of oriental esotericism. Therefore when we are asked: Why is anything refuted? Why is there opposition? — it is not incumbent upon us to answer. It would be incumbent upon us to answer if the opposition came from our side. But it does not! The duty to answer rests upon one who denies, not upon one who agrees. That is obvious enough.

In the coming weeks ⁵ you will be able to hear of the connection between spiritual science and the Event of Golgotha and you will realize that the whole vocation, the whole mission of the spiritual scientific movement in the world is raised to a higher sphere inasmuch as spiritual science puts into effect the inspiration, the power proclaimed as the Spirit by Christ Himself.

So we see how Powers work together in the world, how everything that appears to oppose the progress of mankind subsequently turns out to be a blessing. We realize, too, that in the Post-Atlantean epoch — from age to age — the Spirit who has brought man freedom will appear again in a new form; *Luciferus*, the sovereign Bearer of Light, will be redeemed. For everything in the great World Plan is good and the evil endures only for a season. Therefore he alone believes in eternity of the evil who confounds the temporal with the eternal; he who does not rise from the temporal to the eternal can never understand the evil.

THE DEED OF CHRIST AND THE OPPOSING SPIRITUAL POWERS

GA 107

II. Mephistopheles and Earthquakes

1 January 1909, Berlin

THE THEME OF THE lecture to-day is of a profoundly occult character, the title — strange as it may seem to begin with — being: “Mephistopheles and Earthquakes”. We shall see that not only does the problem of the figure of Mephistopheles lead us into a deep realm of occultism but that the same applies to the problem of earthquakes if explained from the spiritual point of view. I have already spoken here and in several other places about the interior of the earth and have also referred to the question of earthquakes. We shall now approach the subject of these most tragic happenings on the earth's surface, from yet another side.

The figure of Mephistopheles which will be our starting-point to-day, is familiar to you all from Goethe's *Faust*. You know that Mephistopheles is a Being — we shall not enter to-day into the question of how far the poetic presentation tallies with the occult facts — a figure who appears in the drama as the seducer and tempter of Faust who, in a certain respect, may be thought of as the representative of man aspiring to reach the heights of existence. In lectures on Goethe I have also indicated what spiritual vistas are revealed in the scene of the “Passage to the Mothers”, where Mephistopheles holds in his hand the key giving access to the dark, nether region where the Mothers dwell. Mephistopheles himself may not enter this region. He merely indicates that in this mysterious realm there is no difference between “below” and “above”:

“Sink then! I might as well say, Mount!

'Tis quite the same.”

We know too that in characterizing this region, Mephistopheles uses the word “Naught”, “Nothingness”. In a certain sense, therefore, he represents the spirit who in this “Naught” would be seeking something that is valueless to him. Faust answers as any true seeker to-day might answer a materialistic thinker: “In thy Naught I hope to find the All”.

Goethean research has made many attempts to find the clue to the figure of Mephistopheles. In other lectures I have said that the explanation of the name Mephistopheles is to be found in the Hebrew language, where “Mephiz” is the word used for one who obstructs, who corrupts, and “topel” for one who lies. We have therefore to think of this name as belonging to a being who brings corruption and hindrances to man and is a spirit of untruth, deception and illusion.

It may occur to those who read the introduction to *Faust*, the "Prologue in Heaven", thoughtfully, that it contains words which resound as it were across thousands of years. Goethe has let words spoken between the Lord and Job in the Book of Job re-echo at the beginning of *Faust*. In the Book of Job we read that Job is a good, upright and pious man and of how the sons of the Lord of Light present themselves before Him. Among them is a certain enemy of the Light. In a conversation between the enemy of the Light and the supreme Lord, this enemy of the Light says that he has "gone to and fro in the earth", seeking and trying out many things. The Lord asks: "Knowest thou my servant Job?" and the enemy of the Light — for so we will call him — answers the Lord that Job is known to him and that he would assuredly be able to divert him from the Good and bring him to perdition. This spirit has to make two attempts to approach Job and he then lays hold of him through injuring his physical body. He indicates this expressly when he says to the Lord: "Seize his possessions and he will not fall; but touch his bone and his flesh and he will fall!" Who can fail to hear an echo of this in *Faust* when the Lord calls to Mephistopheles in the "Prologue in Heaven": "Knowest thou Faust, my servant!" And then, in similar terms, we hear the retort of the spirit who in the Book of Job comes before the Lord, when Mephistopheles asserts that he can lead Faust gently on the way, that he can win him from the paths which lead to the Good. Here, then, we are listening to sounds striking together in unison across the ages.

When you are thinking about the figure of Mephistopheles, you may often have asked yourselves: Who is Mephistopheles, in reality? Grave mistakes are made here, mistakes which admittedly can be corrected only by deeper, occult insight. The name itself suggests that Mephistopheles is associated with the devil, or the idea of the devil, for the word "topel" is the same as "*Teufel*" — devil. But the other question — and here we come into a realm of serious fallacies which frequently occur in explanations of the figure of Mephistopheles — the other question is: Whether Mephistopheles can be identified with the spirit we know as Lucifer, who during and after the Lemurian epoch approached mankind together with his hosts and entrenched himself as it were in the evolutionary process? The prevailing tendency in Europe is to identify the figure of Mephistopheles as he appears in Goethe's *Faust* but also in earlier folk-literature (Folk Plays, Puppet Plays and so forth), with Lucifer. Mephistopheles is a familiar character everywhere, and the question is: Are he and his hosts identical with Lucifer and his hosts? In other words: Are the effects of the Mephistophelean influence upon man the same as those of Lucifer? — That is the question before us to-day.

We know when Lucifer approached man. We have studied the course of human evolution on earth through the epoch when the sun with its beings, and subsequently the moon, separated from the earth together with the forces that would have made further development for man impossible. And we have learned that at a time when man was still not ready for his astral body to become independent, Lucifer and his hosts approached him. The effect upon man was twofold. It was towards the end of the Lemurian epoch when, in his astral body, man was actually exposed to the influences issuing from Lucifer. If Lucifer had not approached, man would, it is true, have been protected from certain evils but he would not have attained what must be accounted one of his greatest blessings.

The significance of Lucifer's influence becomes evident when we ask ourselves what would have transpired if since the Lemurian epoch there had been no Luciferic influence, if Lucifer and his hosts had remained separate and apart from man's evolution! Until the middle of the Atlantean epoch man would have evolved as a being who in every impulse of his astral body would have obeyed the influences of certain spiritual Beings of a higher rank than himself; these Beings would have retained their sway over him until the middle of the Atlantean epoch. If that had happened, man's faculties of perception and cognition would not have been directed to the material world until a much later period. During the Lemurian and early Atlantean epochs, no passions, no desires would have arisen from his sense-perceptions; he would have confronted the world of sense as it were in a state of innocence, obedient in his every action to the impulses instilled into him by higher spiritual Beings. The instincts prompting him to action would not have been of exactly the same nature as those of the higher animals to-day, but more spiritual. His every deed on earth would have been prompted, not by mere impulses, but by a kind of spiritual instinct. As things were, under the influence of Lucifer man came earlier to the stage where he said: This delights and attracts me, that is repellent to me! He reached the stage of following his own impulses earlier than would otherwise have been the case; he became an independent being, with a measure of inner freedom. The consequence was that he was detached in a certain way from the spiritual world. To put it concisely, one might say: Without this influence of Lucifer, man would have remained a spiritualized animal — an animal who would gradually have developed a form nobler and more beautiful than could have been developed by man under the influence of Lucifer. Man would have remained far more of an angelic being if Lucifer's influence had not taken effect in the Lemurian epoch; but on the other hand, the higher Beings would have guided him as it were on leading-strings. In the middle of the Atlantean epoch something would have befallen him suddenly: his eyes would have been fully opened, the tapestry of the whole material world of sense would have lain around him — but gazing upon it he would simultaneously have perceived the Divine-Spiritual, a Divine-Spiritual world behind every physical object. If, therefore, in his former state of dependence man had looked back into the bosom of the Divine whence he had proceeded, beholding the Gods of Light sending their radiance into his soul, guiding and leading him, something would have come about for him — this is not a mere picture but corresponds in a high degree with the reality — namely, that the world of sense in its entirety would have been outspread in transparency before him, revealing behind it those other Divine-Spiritual Beings who had taken the place of what had now been lost. One spiritual world would have closed behind him and a new spiritual world opened before him. Man would have remained a child in the hands of higher, Divine-Spiritual Beings; independence would not have been established in the human soul.

It did not happen so, because Lucifer had approached man and made part of the underlying spiritual world invisible to him. The personal instincts, passions and desires which arose in the human astral body spread a cloud of darkness over the spiritual Beings of the world out of which man is born and who would otherwise have remained perpetually visible to him.

Hence in those great centers of the Oracles in ancient Atlantis the Initiates had expressly trained themselves to behold that part of the spiritual world which had been concealed as the result of Lucifer's influence. The aim of all the preparation undergone by the guardians and pupils of the ancient Oracles in the Atlantean Mysteries was to enable them to perceive that part of the spiritual world of light which in consequence of Lucifer's influence upon the astral body of man had withdrawn from his field of vision. And visible too, were those figures seen by man in the various conditions of soul running parallel with initiation, figures which from a world of Light penetrate into our world decked in the raiment provided by the astral world. In the ancient Oracle centers the Atlantean Initiate beheld in the spirit those figures who were in truth spiritual Beings of a higher rank than he — Beings who had not descended into the physical world and who had therefore remained invisible to ordinary sight when man's eyes were opened prematurely. But since Lucifer himself was an opponent of these worlds of Light, it was inevitable that he too should be visible to the initiates; and the hosts of Lucifer *were* visible to the Atlanteans who in their shadowy, clairvoyant consciousness, in the sleeping state and in conditions midway between sleeping and waking, could be transported into the spiritual world. When part of the world of Light was accessible to these Atlantean men, part of the world opposing the world of Light was also visible; the Luciferic hosts were visible — not Lucifer himself. These noble figures belonging to the world of light were as fascinating and splendid in their astral raiment as those of the opposing world of deception were fearsome and terrible.

Thus it was the influence of Lucifer in the evolution of humanity that made it possible for man to fall into error and evil but also to attain freedom. Had there been no Luciferic influence, the conditions I have been describing to you would have come about in the middle of the Atlantean epoch: the tapestry of the sense-world would have been outspread before man; the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms would have been materially visible to him; also the phenomena of nature and of the heavens, thunder, lightning, clouds, air — all would have been visible to external sight. But behind it all would have been the unmistakable presence of Divine-Spiritual Beings. Because Lucifer's influence had already taken effect in man's astral body, his physical body — at that time still transmutable — had been so prepared ever since the Lemurian epoch and on into the Atlantean, that it could not become the direct instrument for the physical world of sense with the spiritual world visibly behind it. And so man could not immediately behold the physical sense-world in the form in which it would simultaneously have revealed itself to him as a spiritual world. The three lower kingdoms of nature lay around him; the physical world became a veil over the spiritual world. Man could not, nor can he to this day, see directly into the spiritual world.

But because man had passed through this evolution, a different influence was able to assert itself in the middle of the Atlantean epoch — an influence from quite another side and not to be confused with that of Lucifer and his hosts. Although it was Lucifer who first made it possible for man to come under the sway of this other influence, although it was Lucifer who caused the human physical body to become denser than it would otherwise have become, nevertheless it was necessary for yet another influence to approach man in order to bring him completely into the material world of sense, in order to shut him off entirely from the spiritual world so that he was led to the illusion: There is no other world than the world of material existence outspread before me! From the middle of the Atlantean epoch an opponent quite different in character from Lucifer approached man, namely the Being who casts such mist and darkness around his faculties of perception that he makes no effort nor unfolds any urge to fathom the secrets of the world of sense. If you picture to yourselves that under Lucifer's influence the sense-world became like a veil, through the influence of this second Being the physical world in its totality became like a dense rind, closing off the spiritual world. It was only the Atlantean Initiates who were able, through the preparation they had undergone, to pierce this dense covering of the material, physical world.

The Powers who approached man in order to obscure his vision of the other side of divine existence are brought to our notice for the first time in the teachings given to his followers and pupils by Zarathustra, the great leader of the ancient Persians. The mission of Zarathustra was to instill culture into a people who, unlike the ancient Indians, did not by nature yearn perpetually for the spiritual world. Zarathustra's mission was to impart to his people a culture directed to the world of sense, aiming at mastery of the material world through means dependent upon the efforts and labors of physical man. In the civilization of ancient Persia, therefore, man was less subject to the influence of Lucifer than to the influence of that Being who since the middle of the Atlantean epoch had approached mankind, with the result that many of the Initiates at that time had lapsed into the practice of a form of black magic; having been led astray by this tempter, they misused for the purposes of the physical-material world what was accessible to them from the spiritual world. The mighty influence of the forces of black magic which finally led to the destruction of Atlantis had its origin in the temptations of that Being whom Zarathustra taught his people to know as Ahriman ("Angra Mainyu"), the Being who opposed the God of Light proclaimed by Zarathustra as "Ahura Mazdao", the "Great Aura".

These two figures — Lucifer and Ahriman — must be clearly distinguished from each other. For Lucifer is a Being who detached himself from the spiritual hosts of heaven *after* the separation of the sun, whereas Ahriman had already broken away *before* the separation of the sun and is an embodiment of quite different powers. The result of Lucifer's influence in the Lemurian epoch was merely the corruption of the faculty, still possessed by man in the Atlantean epoch, to manipulate the forces of air and water. In the book entitled *From the Akasha Chronicle* you will have read that in Atlantean times the seminal forces in plant and animal were still at man's command and could be drawn forth just as the forces used in the form of steam for propelling machines can be extracted from mineral coal to-day. I have told you that when these forces are drawn forth they are connected in a mysterious way with the nature-forces in wind, weather and the like; and if applied by man for purposes running counter to the divine purposes, these nature-forces are called into action against him.

Here lies the cause of the Atlantean flood and of the devastation wrought by the powers of nature which led to the disappearance of the whole continent of Atlantis. But even before that time, man had lost command over the forces of fire and the power to ally them with certain mysterious forces of the earth. Power over the forces of fire and earth in a certain combination had already been withdrawn from man. But now — through the influence of Ahriman and his accomplices — he again acquired a certain mastery over the forces of fire and earth, with dire consequences. And much that is to be heard about the use of fire in ancient Persia is connected with what I am now telling you. Many forces that are applied in black magic and are connected with it, lead to the result that man lays hold of forces of an entirely different nature and thus gains an influence over fire and earth, with terrible and devastating results. The practice of black magic by the descendants of the Atlanteans in ancient Persia would still have been effective had not the teachings of Zarathustra revealed how Ahriman, as an opposing power, ensnares man and clouds his vision of the spiritual reality behind the world of sense. Thus through Zarathustra and his followers, influence was brought to bear upon a large part of Post-Atlantean civilization; on the one hand men were taught of the workings of the sublime God of Light to whom they may turn, and, on the other, of the malefic power of Ahriman and his hosts.

Ahriman works upon man in countless, infinitely diverse ways. — I have told you that the Event of the Mystery of Golgotha was a moment of supreme importance for the evolution of the world. The Christ appeared in the realm into which man enters after death, where Ahriman's influence was even mightier than in the world around man here on earth between birth and death. In the realm of existence between death and rebirth, Ahriman's influences worked upon man with terrible, overwhelming power. And if nothing else had taken place, utter darkness would gradually have closed in upon man in the 'realm of Shades' — as it was correctly designated by the ancient Greeks. A condition of complete isolation, leading to the intensification of egoism would have set in between death and rebirth; man would have been born into his new life as a gross and overweening egotist. Hence it is more than a figure of speech to say that after the Event of Golgotha, at the moment when the Blood flowed from the wounds, the Christ appeared in yonder world, in the realm of the Shades, and cast Ahriman into fetters. Although Ahriman's influence remained and is really the origin of all materialistic thinking on the part of man, although this influence can be paralyzed only if men receive into themselves the power emanating from the Mystery of Golgotha, nevertheless they can draw from that Event a power which enables them to find their way once again into the Divine-Spiritual world.

Thus it was to Ahriman that the faculty of human cognition was primarily directed. Ahriman was a Being whose existence was divined by men, a Being of whom they had some knowledge through the culture inaugurated by Zarathustra; and from there the knowledge of Ahriman spread among the other peoples and into their world of ideas. Ahriman with his hosts appears as a figure with the most diverse names among the civilized peoples. And owing to the peculiar conditions obtaining in the souls of the European peoples who had remained farthest in the rear of the migrations from West to East, who had been less affected than the others by what had transpired in the ancient Indian, ancient Persian, Egyptian and even in the Greco-Latin civilizations — owing to these circumstances there prevailed among the European peoples from whom the Fifth Epoch of culture was to be born, an attitude of soul which regarded Ahriman alone as a figure of dread. And while many different names were adopted — as for example, “Mephistopheles” among the Hebrew people — in Europe the figure of Ahriman became the “Devil” in his various forms.

Obviously, therefore, we are gazing here into a concatenation of happenings in the spiritual worlds and many a man who claims to be above medieval superstitions will do well to remember the words in *Faust*:

“The little folk ne'er scent the Devil
E'en though he have them by the collar”.

It is precisely because man closes his spiritual eyes to this influence that he succumbs to it so completely. Goethe's “Mephistopheles” is none other than the figure of Ahriman and must not be confused with Lucifer. All the errors cropping up here and there in commentaries on *Faust* originate from this confusion — although it was indeed Lucifer who first paved the way for Ahriman's influence. In studying Ahriman one is therefore led back to an original influence of Lucifer, the nature of which can only become clear after long preparatory efforts have been made to understand this intimate connection.

The subtle difference between the two Beings must not be overlooked. The essential point is that, fundamentally speaking, Lucifer had brought man under the influence of the powers connected with air and water *only*; whereas it was Ahriman-Mephistopheles who has subjected him to the influence of far more deadly powers and the civilizations immediately to come will see the appearance of many things connected with Ahriman's influence. Through this influence the seeker for the spirit who does not stand upon firm and sure foundations can readily fall prey to the most terrible illusion and deception. For Ahriman is a spirit who sets out to spread deception as to the true nature of the sense-world, especially as an expression of the spiritual world. When a man has a tendency to abnormal, somnambulistic states or through certain wrongful training awakens occult forces whereby egoism is intensified, then Ahriman or Mephistopheles has a ready influence precisely upon these occult forces, an influence that can soon become overwhelmingly powerful. Whereas Lucifer's influence can only bring it about that what confronts a man from the spiritual world (and this applies also to one who is receiving wrongful training) appears to him as an *astral* form visible to the astral body, the manifestations due to the influence of Ahriman are brought to light in that the evil influences on the physical body press through into the etheric body and then become visible as *phantoms*.

In the influences of Ahriman, therefore, we have to do with powers of a much lower nature than the influences of Lucifer. Lucifer's influences can never become as evil as the influences of Ahriman and of those Beings who are connected with the powers of fire. The influence of Ahriman or Mephistopheles can bring it about that in order to attain occult knowledge a man is induced, for example, to undertake certain measures with his physical body. The method that consists in the use and misuse of the physical body is the most evil that can possibly be applied for the purpose of acquiring occult powers. It is a fact that in certain school of black magic such practices are taught in abundance. One of the most terrible perversions to which man may be subject occurs when the forces of the physical body are taken as the starting-point for occult training. It is not possible here to enter into closer detail than the indication that all machinations consisting in any way of a misuse of the forces of the physical body emanate from the influences of Ahriman; and because the effect of this penetrates into man's etheric body, it works as a world of phantoms that is nothing else than the garment of powers which drag man down to a level below that of true manhood. Nearly every ancient civilization — the Indian, the Persian, the Egyptian, the Greco-Latin — had its period of decadence; so too the Mysteries, when the Mystery-traditions were no longer preserved in their purity. During these periods many of those who were either pupils of the Initiates but unable to remain at their level or men to whom the secrets of the Mysteries had been unlawfully betrayed, had fallen into perverse and evil paths. Centers of black magic and its forces originated from these influences and have persisted to this day.

Ahriman is a spirit of lies, a spirit who conjures illusions before men, working together with his confederates in a spiritual world. Ahriman himself is no mirage — far from it! But what is conjured before men's eyes of spirit under his influence — that is mirage, illusion. When a man's desires and passions flow along evil paths and at the same time he lends himself in any way to occult practices, then the occult forces which are awakened penetrate into the etheric body and the most evil powers of corruption appear among the illusory images which may themselves often be majestic, awe-inspiring. Such is the terrible influence of Ahriman upon man.

From what has been said you can gather that through Christ's Coming, Ahriman has been cast into fetters — if this expression may be used — but only, of course, for those who endeavor unceasingly to fathom the Christ-Mystery. And outside the forces streaming from the Christ-Mystery, protection in the world against the influence of Ahriman will steadily diminish. In a certain sense — and many signs proclaim it — our epoch courts these influences of Ahriman. In certain occult teachings the hosts of Ahriman are also called the *Asuras*. These are of course, the evil Asuras who at a certain time fell away from the evolutionary path of the Asuras who endowed man with personality. It has already been indicated that these are spiritual Beings who detached themselves from the evolution of the earth *before* the separation of the sun.

Up to now we have been describing merely the terrible influence that Ahriman can exercise upon a certain abnormal process of development, one that proceeds along occult paths. But in a certain respect the whole of mankind came under the influence of Ahriman during the second half of the Atlantean epoch. The whole Post-Atlantean epoch has within it, in a certain sense, the aftermath of Ahriman's influence — in one region of the earth more, in another less. But Ahriman's influence has asserted itself everywhere and all the teachings given to the peoples by the ancient Initiates concerning the Spirits of Light who are the opponents of Ahriman were given primarily in order to draw these peoples away from Ahriman's influence. It was a good, wisely led education of mankind.

But let us not forget that since that time the destiny of Ahriman has been interwoven in a certain sense with the destiny of humanity, and manifold happenings, of which the uninitiated can know nothing, keep the whole karma of humanity in perpetual connection with the karma of Ahriman. To understand what will now be said, we must realize that over and above the karma which belongs to every individual human being, there is at every stage of existence a universal karmic law. All the categories of beings have their karma — the karma of the one differing from that of the other. But karma operates through every realm of existence and there are things in the karma of mankind, in the karma of a people, of a community or other group of human beings, which must be regarded as collective karma, so that in certain circumstances the individual can be drawn into the sway of the collective karma. It will not always be easy for one who cannot penetrate to the root of the matter to discern exactly where the influences of the powers concerned lie in the case of human beings overtaken by such a destiny. An individual within some community may well be entirely guiltless as far as his own karma is concerned; but because he stands within a field of collective karma, calamity may befall him. If, however, he is entirely guiltless, compensation will be made in later incarnations.

In the wider connection we must look not only at the karma of the past but also think of the karma of the future. A terrible fate may befall a whole group of human beings; the reason why just this group should suffer such a destiny is not to be discovered. Someone who might be capable of investigating the karma of an individual will in certain circumstances be unable to find anything at all that could have led to this tragic fate, for the threads of karma are extremely complicated. The cause of such karmic happenings may lie far, far away — but it is connected with these people nevertheless. And it may be that the whole group, while guiltless, has been overtaken by some collective karma which could not overtake those immediately guilty, because circumstances did not make this possible. In such cases the only thing that can be said is this: In the total karma of an individual, everything is ultimately balanced out, including what befalls him without guilt on his part; it is all inscribed in his karma and compensation in the fullest sense will be made in future time. — Therefore in considering the law of karma we must also take into account the karma of the future. Nor must it be forgotten that man is not an isolated being but that every individual has to share jointly in the collective karma of humanity. We must remember, too, that man, together with humanity, is connected with those hierarchies of Beings who have not entered into the physical world and that he is also drawn into the karma of the hierarchies. In the destinies of mankind in the spiritual world a great deal appears the connections of which are not to be sought in the immediate circumstances, but the karmic consequences come to pass inevitably. Since the second half of the Atlantean epoch, Ahriman's karma has been linked with the karma of mankind. Where, then, are the deeds of Ahriman, over and above what is wrought by him in the bodies of men in order to spread phantoms and illusion over the world of sense? Where are these other deeds?

Everything in the world has, as it were, two sides, one pertaining more to man as a spiritual being, the other to what has developed as the kingdoms of nature around him. The earth is the arena of man's existence. To the eye of spirit this earth is revealed as a combination of different layers or strata. The outermost stratum is called the "Mineral Earth" or "Mineral Stratum" because it contains only such substances as are to be found in the ground under our feet. This is the shallowest stratum, relatively speaking. Then begins the "Fluidic Earth", the material constitution of which is entirely different from that of the "mineral" stratum above it. This second stratum is, as it were, endowed with inner life; and only because the solid, mineral stratum is spread over it are the inner forces of this second stratum held together. If they were released they would instantaneously disperse into cosmic space. This stratum, therefore, lies under tremendous pressure. A third stratum is the "Vapor Earth". It is not a material vapor such as arises on the earth's surface but in this third stratum the substance itself is imbued with inner forces, comparable only with the passions, the inner urges and impulses of man. Whereas on the earth it is only beings like animals and men who can unfold passions, this third stratum — just as the substances of the earth are permeated by forces of magnetism and warmth — is permeated in a material sense with forces similar to those we know as human and animal passions and impulses. The fourth or "Form Stratum" is so designated because it contains the material and the forces of what are encountered in the mineral part of the earth as entities cast into form. And the characteristic of the fifth stratum, or "Fertility Earth" is that even as material it teems with infinite fertility. If you were to get hold of part of this stratum it would perpetually be sending forth new impulses, new sproutings; rampant fertility is the intrinsic quality of this stratum. Then we come to the sixth stratum, the "Fire Earth", containing as "substances" within it, forces that can bring about terrible havoc and destruction. It is actually into these forces that the primordial Fire has been banished.

In and from this stratum the realm of Ahriman operates — in a material sense. What manifests in the phenomena of outer nature, in air and water, in cloud formations, in lightning and thunder — all this is, so to speak, a last vestige on the earth's surface, of forces that were already connected with ancient Saturn and separated from the earth together with the sun. By what is working in these forces, the inner fire-forces of the earth are placed in the service of Ahriman. There he has the center of his activity; and whereas his spiritual influences make their way to the souls of men and lead them to error, we see how Ahriman — in a certain respect shackled — has certain foci for his activity in the interior of the earth. Were we to understand the mysterious connections of what has come to pass on the earth under Ahriman's influence and what Ahriman's own karma has become in consequence of this, we should recognize in the quakes and tremors of the earth the connection between such grievous, tragic happenings in nature and the power that holds sway on the earth. These manifestations are something that has remained since ancient times as a reaction on the earth against the good Beings of Light.

Thus forces allied with the Beings who were thrust away from their connection with the earth at the time when the good Beings of light established the beneficent phenomena around the earth-globe, are active, and in a certain sense we can recognize the echoings of these fire-forces which in earlier times were withdrawn from man's control, in what is wrought by fire in such terrible manifestations of nature. Although the karma of Ahriman has been linked with that of humanity since the time of Atlantis, the suggestion should not arise that any guilt is to be attributed to those who are victims of what Ahriman's karma has evoked. Such happenings are connected with the collective karma of humanity in which the individual has also to share. The *causes* which produce their effects in particular localities as the workings of Ahriman's karma often lie somewhere else entirely. It is however these particular places which afford the necessary opportunity.

There we see a connection which seems to be like a relic of catastrophes undergone by humanity in the far distant past. The power to work upon fire which man had formerly possessed, was withdrawn from him. Hence ancient Lemuria was brought to its destruction by the fire of the passions of men. The same fire that is now below was then above; it receded from the earth's surface and the same fire that issued as a kind of extract from the primordial fire is the inorganic, mineral fire of to-day. So too it was with the forces working through air and water which, again by way of the passions of men, led to the Atlantean catastrophes. These catastrophes were evoked by the collective karma of humanity but a relic has remained and this relic awakens the echoes of those earlier catastrophes. Our volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are nothing else than the echoes of these catastrophes. But it should never so much as occur to anyone to attach an iota of guilt to the victim of such a calamity or to withhold compassion in the fullest measure. It must be absolutely clear to an anthroposophist that the karma of these individuals has nothing to do with the guilt to which the catastrophes are due and it should never occur to him to withhold help from anyone because — to put it trivially — he believes in karma and therefore assumes that this destiny was brought on by the man himself. Karma demands of us that we help human beings because we may be sure that our help means something that is written in their karma and will turn that karma in a more favorable direction. Understanding that is based upon the recognition of karma must necessarily lead to compassion; our compassion for the victims of such catastrophes will be all the greater, for our knowledge tells us that there is a collective karma of humanity from which the individual members have to suffer, that just as such happenings are brought about by humanity as one whole, so too must humanity be answerable for them; we must regard such a destiny as our own and help not only out of a spontaneous impulse but because we know that we are involved in the karma of humanity and share the guilt incurred!

A question was handed to me this morning about earthquake catastrophes. The question runs as follows: "What is the occult explanation of earthquakes? Can they be foreseen? If particular catastrophes can be foreseen, why should it not be possible to give some warning beforehand? Such a warning might possibly be ineffective the first time but certainly not on another occasion."

You may remember something of what was said at the end of the lecture on the interior of the earth about the possibility of earthquakes. We will not consider that now but enter directly into this question. In reality it has two sides. The one is: Whether from the occult connections which can be discerned, earthquakes can be foreseen? The answer to this is that the knowledge of such matters belongs to the deepest realm of occult science. In respect of a particular event on the earth, an event with roots as deeply laid as those described to-day, and connected with causes extending widely over the earth — in respect of such an event it is absolutely correct to say that even in a particular case an indication of time can be given. It would certainly be possible for the occultist to give such an indication. But the other side of the question is: whether it is *permissible* for such indications to be given? — For one who confronts the occult secrets from outside it will seem almost a matter of course that the answer will be "Yes!" And yet the truth is that in regard to such events it is actually only twice or three times in any one century — at the very most, twice or three times — that any prediction can be announced from the centers of Initiation. For you must remember that these things are connected with the karma of humanity as a whole and if, for example, they were avoided in one instance they would inevitably occur in some other place and in a different form. The prediction itself would alter nothing. And just think what a terrible encroachment it would be into the karma of the earth as a whole if human measures were adopted to prevent such happenings. The reaction would be so fearful, so violent, that only in very rare and exceptional cases would a high Initiate, foreseeing an earthquake, be able to make use of his knowledge to help himself or those near him. *With full knowledge* he would have to face his end, as a matter of course! For these things that have been implicit in the karma of humanity for thousands and millions of years cannot be paralyzed by measures adopted during one brief period of evolution. — But there is still more to add.

It has been said already that this very subject is one of the most difficult of all in occult investigation. It is far easier to know something about the astral world, the devachanic world, even about the farthest planets, than about the interior of the earth. Most things one hears are the purest trash, because, as I say, it is one of the most difficult subjects in occultism. The same is true of matters that are connected with these elemental catastrophes. And above all you must realize that clairvoyance is not a matter of just sitting down, inducing a particular condition, and then being able to say what is going on in the whole universe, up to the highest spheres. It is by no means so. To believe any such thing would be as "clever" as to say: "You have the faculty of perception in the physical world; but why was it that when 12 o'clock came and you were sitting in your room, you were neither astonished by nor did you see what happened outside by the River Spree at that hour?" There are hindrances to seership. If the seer in question had gone for a walk at 12 o'clock he would probably have seen what happened. It is *not* the case that all worlds are immediately disclosed through the mere resolve to induce in oneself the requisite condition. The seer has to find his way to the events and investigate them, and these investigations are of the most difficult kind because the hindrances are greatest. — And perhaps at this point something may be said about these hindrances.

If a man is able to walk about on his two legs, you can deprive him of this faculty not only by amputating his legs but also by shutting him up in a cell; then he can no longer walk about. In the same way there are hindrances to occult investigation and in the domain of which we are speaking they are immensely powerful. I will tell you one of the main hindrances and in doing so introduce you to a mysterious relationship. The greatest hindrance to occult investigation in this domain is constituted by the methods and trend of modern materialistic science. The countless illusions and fallacies accumulating in materialistic science to-day, all the research that is not only futile but is prompted by the vanities of men — these are things which in their effects in the higher worlds make investigation into these manifestations and free vision in the higher world impossible or to say the least, extremely difficult. Free vision is clouded as a result of the materialistic research pursued here on earth. It is by no means easy to get to the root of these things. But only wait for the time when spiritual science has become more widespread and when through its influence the materialistic superstitions prevailing in our world will be swept away! Once the nonsensical analogies and hypotheses leading to all kinds of conjectures about the interior of the earth are cast aside, you will see that when spiritual science has itself been integrated into the karma of humanity, when it finds the way to men's souls and is able from there to overcome the opposing powers and materialistic superstitions, when further research can be made into all that is connected with the bitterest foe of mankind, that Being who fetters man's vision within the world of sense — you will see that it will then be possible, even externally, to influence the karma of humanity in the sense that the dire results of such happenings may be alleviated. The reason why the Initiates must be silent about happenings connected with the great karma of humanity is to be found in the materialistic superstitions of men. Many scientific pursuits are in no way imbued with the Faustian striving for truth but prompted entirely by vanity and ambition. How much scientific research is promoted in the world simply because an individual is seeking for something that will be to his personal advantage! If you sum up all these things you will realize the strength of the force that obstructs vision into the world behind the external phenomena of the material world. Not until this fog has been cleared away will the time come when, in respect of certain mysterious manifestations of nature emanating from the foes of mankind and trespassing deeply into human life, it will be possible for help — and then in no small measure — to be given to mankind. Until that time comes there is no such possibility.

I am well aware that these questions have been given a turn not always in the mind of the one who asks them. But it is often the fate of occult science to be obliged to formulate the questions in the right way before they can be correctly answered. Again do not take this to mean that the mysterious connection between earthquakes and the karma of humanity is a secret that cannot be investigated. It *can* be investigated but there are reasons why only the most commonplace aspects of such questions can be presented to the world to-day. Let the knowledge reach mankind through spiritual science that there is a connection between the deeds of men and happenings in nature and then the time will come when these things can be answered in the way the question demands. Spiritual science may pass through many destinies; its influence may even be crippled, remaining within narrow and restricted circles. Nevertheless it will make its way through mankind, will be integrated into the karma of humanity, and then the possibility will be created for individuals themselves to have an effect upon the karma of humanity as a whole.