

Anthroposophical Society in New Hampshire

Easter Newsletter

2021



Demeter, Triptolemos and Persephone, a relief from Greece,
a copy of which is in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City

Verse by Rudolf Steiner for Easter
from the Calendar of the Soul

Easter Mood

*When from the vastness of this world
The sun speaks to human mind
And joy from the depths of soul
In beholding joins with light;
Then thoughts that burst from out the self
Stream into distant space
Unknowingly uniting
The human being with the Spirit's life.*

(John Thomson translation)

Verse by Rudolf Steiner
about the Cycle of the Year:

From: Verse and Meditations

*In the year's course
Alternate ceaselessly
Summer's abounding growth
And Winter's Earth-repose;
So in the course of Man's life
Vigor of waking day
And peaceful bounty of sleep.
Yet does the Spirit-filled soul live on—
Sleeping and waking.
So in the Spirit, the soul of the Earth
Lives through the seasons' changing—
Summer and Winter.*

From: Transparent Realities: The Anthroposophical Impulse in the Environmental Movement; Sophia and Persephone, a lecture given in Dornach in 1987 by Hans Peter van Manen, published by Temple Lodge Press, 1994

During the last Advent that Rudolf Steiner spent on Earth, in 1924, he wrote the Christmas contemplation 'The Mystery of the Logos'. (ed.: in the Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts and reproduced below). It really starts with a threefold appeal for spirit-mindfulness, which means becoming conscious of what lives in the rhythms of time. Literally three epoch-making factors are emphasized:

- 1) The repetition of the regency of the Archangel Michael successively after approximately two and a half thousand years;
- 2) The Mystery of Golgotha as a unique event;
- 3) The working of Persephone-Natura in the course of the year, especially in the spring.

The first factor is extensively expressed in the Michael Letters (Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts) preceding 'The Mystery of the Logos'. Through this, without obvious mention, Michael is strongly included in the Christmas contemplation. The second factor is the main theme to which the title refers. The third is the surprising and original element in the contemplation.....

.....The statements in 'The Mystery of the Logos' concerning Persephone clearly connect with the Karma lectures of the summer of 1924. In these lectures and in the course of lectures *The True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation* (given in Torquay, England in August 1924), the Greek goddess Persephone who is described as identical with the goddess Natura is repeatedly referred to in the writings of the School of Chartres in the Middle Ages.....

In the previous decades of his spiritual scientific work Rudolf Steiner had several times spoken about Persephone—in the sense that Persephone appeared as the image of the human soul—and of how in the course of time the human soul united itself more and more with the Earth.In 1924, in the karma lectures and 'The Mystery of the Logos', Persephone or Natura is a definite, really existing divine being. Who is this divine being?

This question must be dealt with step by step, in the first place with the help of Greek mythology as familiar to us. There Persephone is the daughter of the Earth goddess, Demeter, and Zeus. The flowering nature of spring, especially the plant world, is her element. She is abducted by Hades, the regent of the world of the dead, and led into the underworld.

The heavenly gods are powerless, especially as they do not know where she has vanished to. The mother Demeter has to go through the human world in a disguised form to trace her lost daughter and to obtain human help for her release. At last, Triptolemos, son of a king, becomes ready for the rescue and the descent into the Land of Shades. Persephone is set free—but not entirely. The well-known agreement is reached and is important because of its significance regarding the seasons: for the greater part of the year she is allowed to live in the light of the world above, which means on Earth and in the world of the Olympic gods; the smaller part of the year, the winter months, she has to spend with Hades in his kingdom. The myth was known to be the main content of the Eleusinian Mysteries, where it certainly received some esoteric enlargement. With this in mind, we see also Schuré's reconstruction of the Drama of Eleusis.

But who is Persephone in the sense of Rudolf Steiner's lectures from 1924? Already in his lectures in 1923, published as *The Cycle of the Year*, the Earth Soul is often spoken of. Perhaps it goes too far to identify Persephone with this Earth soul. But in the Christmas contemplation of 1924, 'The Mystery of the Logos', she is a lofty spiritual being who has connected herself with the Earth by ensouling the ether of the Earth and especially that of the plant kingdom. With this she frees the plant from 'development only through earthly matter'.

From this one can get the impression that this Being and her impulses originate from the Old Sun. The plant world in its obvious purity is a living reminder of this macrocosmic, paradisaical condition. Regarding the supposed origin from the Sun, this divine being is Christ-related. The relationship also becomes obvious in the balance which she creates between upperworld and underworld. All Olympian gods are slightly Luciferic. Hades, though, appears as an embellished Imagination of Ahriman. According to 'The Mystery of the Logos', Persephone holds a rhythmic balance between the flowering and dying of the plant world. What she does year in and year out for the plant world can be compared to what Christ is seeking to achieve for mankind: to secure continuity of life by creating a balance between above and below, between Lucifer and Ahriman.

In 'The Mystery of the Logos' the essence of Persephone's working is emphasized, and is of great significance today. In more and more circles people are deeply concerned about the survival of living nature. The environmental problems have more and more been recognized as being of the utmost urgency. In the language of our considerations, they constitute a threatening interference in the working sphere of Persephone-Natura. In the environmental protection movements live the impulse to save this working sphere. In certain moral deeds and in many social efforts, which stand out for their idealism and readiness for self-sacrifice, such as for instance Amnesty International, one can recognize the Christ Impulse, although many of the people involved have no conscious connection with Christianity. In the same way, one can observe in many practical and idealistic deeds in the field of ecology an unconscious act of worship to serve the goddess Persephone-Natura.....

.....In closing, this search for spirit-mindfulness turns back to the question raised at the beginning of this essay: what can those Anthroposophists do who do not work in natural science, or in research into the powers of the ether, or in a job with practical application (like agriculture)? What inner deeds are required in the light of the new initiation?

In the sphere of meditative exercises there are different possibilities for including Persephone-Natura in one's own inward endeavor. Firstly we mention....the meditative experience of the seasons, especially through the verses for each week in the *Calendar of the Soul*. This too is a kind of spiritual reflection. One enters into the time rhythms of the etheric world, where the sphere of activity of Christ and Natura permeate each other. The latter is really addressed by name in the verse *Michael Mood* at the beginning of these verses for the wintry time of year in the lines:

O Nature, thy maternal life
I bear it deep within my will's own being.

It is not surprising then that the Foundation Stone Meditation also opens up possibilities for meditation in this direction.

In the Foundation Stone verses the human soul calls upon itself, that is, upon its own archetype; the Anthro-Sophia calls upon the human soul. In the first three parts all three speak to one aspect of threefold man; at each conclusion a reminder resounds warning of the elemental beings working in nature:

The Elemental Spirits hear it
From East and West and North and South:
May human beings hear it!

They are called as witnesses to the laying of the Foundation Stone of the New Mysteries. We saw that the totality of the elemental beings create, so to speak, the garment of the nature goddess, irrespective of the name under which she was worshipped. In the second slightly abbreviated version of the Foundation Stone verses, the calling sounds out further:

The Spirits hear it:
From East and West and North and South....

Obviously, here too are meant first and foremost the four groups of elemental beings. But the word 'spirit' comprises more than these beings. Here are meant all those beings who are of a supersensible nature but still have their working sphere in the physical realm. To this belong the environmental and space spirits, beings who were formerly called fairies and who are ranked above the gnomes, undines, sylphs and salamanders. Among those you can count as the highest and all-embracing spirit, Persephone.

This aspect illuminated between the lines need not stay rigidly in the background. It can be made real through work with the seven so-called (daily) 'rhythms'. These brief summaries, given each day of the Christmas Conference, are made up from the first three parts of the verses. In their totality these seven rhythms present a guide to spirit-mindfulness in a slightly different way from the *Calendar of the Soul*. Many have formed the habit of meditating each 'rhythm' on the day of the week on which it was given Rudolf Steiner. The sixth of these rhythms is therefore the Monday rhythm. In its form, though, it does not follow suit because it is the only one that does not contain a threefold summary of them from the three main parts. Instead, it starts with the call to Christ in the concluding lines of the fourth verse, and is immediately followed by the calling of the elemental spirits from the first three verses:

O Light Divine,
O Sun of Christ!
The Elemental Spirits hear it
From East and West and North and South:
May human beings hear it!

The fourth verse starts with the remembering of the turning point of time when Christ, the Spirit Light of the World, descended to the Earth. In the first instance it is true when one considers the being that has been five times named in this fourth part of the verse the Light and once as the Sun equal to Christ Himself, who could say of himself: 'I am the Light of the World'. Deviating from this, Willem Zeylmans showed briefly and surprisingly in his pioneering study of the Foundation Stone verse how the fivefold Light can meditatively speaking represent different spirit beings, the first one the divine Sophia. This view that not only one being is addressed is supported remarkably by the words of Rudolf Steiner, easily missed, when he introduces the sixth rhythm on 31 December 1923. He suddenly speaks here about 'this Divine Light' and 'the Christ Sun' in the plural,

how they 'shine, so that they can be heard like the shining suns from East, from West, from North and South'.

Here follows a free rendering of Zeylmans' description, a personal interpretation of the spirit beings called upon in the Monday rhythm. The 'Divine Light', here mentioned first, is the Light of the Christ Being, the divine Sophia, the 'consciousness of Christ', as Rudolf Steiner called her three years before (see the lectures *The Search for the New Isis, the Divine Sophia*, Dec. 1920). So, the Divine Light encloses both Christ and Sophia. And Persephone? She who stems from the Old Sun, who guards the connection of earthly nature with the Sun, and is the highest of the 'Spirits' called upon, we may think of as standing directly under the Christ Sun. Looked at in this way she is, without being named, present between the second and third lines of the rhythm.

So not only can we include Anthroposophia in our daily and weekly exercises but Persephone-Natura as well. **Perhaps we achieve in this way a contribution to spreading a thought-climate in the world in which spiritual knowledge and the concern for nature can permeate each other.**

Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts

A Christmas Study: The Mystery of the Logos, published 28 December 1924

Our study of the Michael Mystery was irradiated by thoughts of the Mystery of Golgotha. For, in effect, Michael is the Power who leads man towards the Christ along the true way of man's salvation.

But the Michael Mission is one of those that are repeated again and again in rhythmical succession in the cosmic evolution of mankind. In its beneficial influence on earthly mankind, it was repeated before the Mystery of Golgotha. It was connected in that time with all the active revelations which the Christ-Force — as yet external to the Earth — had to pour down to the Earth for the unfolding of mankind. After the Mystery of Golgotha, the Michael Mission enters the service of what must now be achieved in earthly humanity through Christ Himself. In its repetitions, the Michael Mission now appears in a changed and ever-progressing form. The point is that it appears in repetitions. The Mystery of Golgotha, on the other hand, is an all-embracing World-event, taking place once only in the whole course of the cosmic evolution of mankind.

It was only when humanity had reached the unfolding of the Intellectual or Mind-Soul that the ever-continued danger which was there potentially from the beginning — the danger lest humanity's existence should become severed from the existence of the Divine-Spiritual — made itself fully felt.

And in the same manner in which the soul of man loses the conscious experience in and with the Divine-Spiritual Beings, there merges around him that which we today call 'Nature'.

Man no longer sees the essence and being of Humanity in the Divine-Spiritual Cosmos; he sees the accomplished work of the Divine-Spiritual in this earthly realm. To begin with, however, he sees it not in the abstract form in which it is seen today—not as physically sensible events and entities held together by those abstract ideal contents which we call 'Natural Laws'. To begin with he sees it still as Divine-Spiritual Being—Divine-Spiritual Being surging up and down in all that he perceives around him, in the birth and decay of living animals, in the springing and sprouting of the plant world, in the activity of the springs and rivers, in cloud and wind and weather. All these processes of being around him represent to him the gestures, deeds and speech of the Divine Being at the foundation of 'Nature'.

Once upon a time, man had seen in the constellations and movements of the stars the deeds and gestures of the Divine Beings of the Cosmos, whose words he was thus able to read in the heavens.

In like manner, the 'facts of Nature' now became for him an expression of the Goddess of the Earth. For the Divinity at work in Nature was conceived as feminine.

Far down into the Middle Ages, the relics of this mode of conception were still at work in the souls of men, filling the Intellectual or Mind-Soul with an Imaginative content.....

.....The way in which men looked in this direction in the age of the Intellectual or Mind-Soul is reminiscent of the Myth of Persephone and of the mystery that underlies it.

Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, is compelled by the God of the Underworld to follow him into his kingdom. Eventually it is achieved that she spends one-half of the year only in the Nether world and dwells for the remainder of the year in the Upper world.

This Myth of Persephone was still a great and wonderful expression of the way in which Man, in an age of immemorial antiquity, had perceived and known the evolutionary process of the Earth in dream-like clairvoyance.

In primeval times all the world-creative activity had proceeded from the surroundings of the Earth. The Earth itself was only in process of becoming, and molded its existence in cosmic evolution from out of the activities of the surrounding world. The Divine-Spiritual Beings of the Cosmos were the creators and molders of the Earth's existence. But when the Earth was far enough advanced to become an independent heavenly body, Divine-Spiritual Being descended from the great Cosmos to the Earth and became the Earth-Divinity. This cosmic fact the dream-like clairvoyance of primeval mankind had seen and known; and of such knowledge the Myth of Persephone remained — but not only this. For indeed, far down even into the Middle Ages, the way in which men sought to know and penetrate into 'Nature' was still a relic of the same ancient knowledge. It was not yet as in these later times, when men only see according to their sense-impressions, i.e., according to that which appears on the surface of the Earth. They still saw according to the forces that work upwards to the surface from the depths of the Earth. And these 'forces of the depths' — the 'forces of the Nether world' — they saw in mutual interplay with the influences of the stars and elements working from the Earth's environment.

The plants in their varied forms grow forth, revealing themselves in many-colored glory. Therein are at work the forces of Sun and Moon and Stars, together with the forces of the Earth's depths. The ground and foundation for this is given in the minerals, whose existence is entirely conditioned by that part of the cosmic Beings which has become earthly. Through those heavenly forces alone, which have become earthly, rock and stone shoot forth out of the Nether world. The animal kingdom, on the other hand, has not assumed the forces of the earthly depths. It comes into being through those world-forces alone which are at work from the surroundings of the Earth. It owes its growth, development and surging life, its powers of nutrition, its possibilities of movement, to the Sun-forces streaming down to the Earth. And under the influence of the Moon-forces streaming down to the Earth it has the power to reproduce itself. It appears in manifold forms and species because the starry constellations are working in manifold ways from the Cosmos, shaping and molding this animal life. The animals are, as it were, only placed down here on Earth from out the Cosmos. It is only with their dim life of consciousness that they partake in the earthly realm; with their origin, development and growth, with all that they are in order to be able to perceive and move about, they are no earthly creatures.

This mightily conceived idea of the evolution of the Earth lived once upon a time in mankind. The greatness of the conception is scarcely recognizable any longer in the relics of it which came down to the Middle Ages. To attain this knowledge one must go back, with the true vision of the seer, into very ancient times. For even the physical documents that are extant do not reveal what was

really present there in the souls of men, save to those who are able to penetrate to it by a spiritual path.

Now man is not in a position to hold himself so much aloof from the Earth as do the animals. In saying this, we are approaching the *Mystery of Humanity* as well as the *Mystery of the Animal Kingdom*. These *Mysteries* were reflected in the animal cults of the ancient peoples, and above all in that of the Egyptians. They saw the animals as beings who are but guests upon the Earth, and in whom one may perceive the nature and activity of the spiritual world immediately adjoining this earthly realm. And when in pictures they portrayed the human figure in connection with the animal, they were representing to themselves the forms of those elementary, intermediate beings who, though they are indeed in cosmic evolution on the way to humanity, yet purposely refrain from entering the earthly realm, in order not to become human. For there are such elementary, intermediate beings and in picturing them the Egyptians were but reproducing what they saw. Such beings, however, have not the full self-consciousness of man, to attain to which man had to enter this earthly world so completely as to receive something of this earthly nature into his very own. Man had to be exposed to the fact that in this earthly world, though the work of the Divine-Spiritual Beings with whom he is connected is indeed present here, yet *it is only their accomplished work*. And just because only the accomplished work, severed from its Divine origin, is present here, therefore the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings have access to it. Thus, it becomes necessary for man to make this realm of the Divine-accomplished work, permeated as it is by Lucifer and Ahriman, the field of action for one part — namely, the earthly part — of his life's development.

So long as man had not progressed to the unfolding of his Intellectual or Mind-Soul, this was possible, without man's nature becoming permanently severed from its original Divine-Spiritual foundation. But when this point was reached, a corruption took place in man — a corruption of the physical, the etheric and the astral bodies. To an ancient science, this corruption was known as something that was living in man's nature. It was known as a thing that was necessary in order that consciousness might advance to self-consciousness in man. In the stream of knowledge that was cultivated in the centres of learning founded by Alexander the Great, there lived an Aristotelianism which, rightly understood, contained this 'corruption' as an essential element in its psychology. It was only in a later time that these ideas were no longer penetrated in their inward essence. In the ages before the evolution of his Intellectual or Mind Soul, man was, however, interwoven still with the forces of his Divine-Spiritual origin, so much so that from their cosmic field of action these forces were able to balance and hold in check the Luciferic and Ahrimanic Powers that reach out to man on Earth. And from the human side enough was done by way of co-operation to maintain the balance, in those actions of Ritual and of the *Mysteries*, wherein the *picture* was unfolded of the Divine-Spiritual Being diving down into the realm of Lucifer and Ahriman and coming forth again triumphant. Hence in times prior to the *Mystery of Golgotha* we find in the religious rites of different people's pictorial representations of that which afterwards, in the *Mystery of Golgotha*, became reality.

When the Intellectual or Mind-Soul was unfolded, it was through this reality alone that man could continue to be preserved from being severed from the Divine-Spiritual Beings who belonged to him. The Divine had to enter inwardly as Being, even in the earthly life, into the Organization of the Intellectual or Mind-Soul which, during earthly existence, has its life from what is earthly. This took place through the Divine-Spiritual Logos, Christ, uniting His cosmic destiny with the Earth for the sake of mankind.

Persephone came down to the Earth in order to save the plant kingdom from being obliged to form itself from what belongs only to Earth. That is the descent of a Divine Spiritual Being into the

Nature of the Earth. Persephone, too, has a kind of 'resurrection,' but this takes place annually, in rhythmical succession.

Over against this event — which is also a cosmic event occurring on the Earth — we have for *Humanity* the descent of the Logos. Persephone descends to bring *Nature* into its original direction. In this case there must be rhythm at the foundation; for the events in Nature take place rhythmically. The Logos descends into humanity. This occurs *once* during human evolution. For the evolution of humanity is but one part in a gigantic cosmic rhythm, in which, before the stage of man's existence, humanity was something altogether different, and in which, after this stage is passed, it will be something altogether different again, whereas the plant life repeats itself as *such* in shorter rhythms.

From the age of the Spiritual Soul onwards it is necessary for humanity to see the *Mystery of Golgotha* in this light. For already in the age of the Intellectual or Mind-Soul there would have been a danger of man being separated, if the *Mystery of Golgotha* had not taken place. In the age of the Spiritual Soul a complete darkening of the Spirit-world would needs come about for human consciousness, if the Spiritual Soul could not strengthen itself sufficiently to look back in inward vision to its Divine-Spiritual origin. If, however, it is able to do this, it finds the cosmic Logos, as the Being Who can lead it back. It fills itself with the mighty picture which reveals what took place on Golgotha.

The beginning of this understanding is the loving comprehension of the cosmic Christmas, the cosmic Initiation-Night, the festive remembrance of which is celebrated each year. For the Spiritual Soul, which first receives the element of Intellectuality, is strengthened by allowing true love to enter into this, the coldest element of soul. And the warmth of true love is there in its highest form when it goes out to the Jesus child who appears on Earth during the cosmic Initiation-Night. In this way man has allowed the highest earthly Spirit-fact, which was at the same time a physical event, to work upon his soul; he has entered upon the path by which he receives Christ into himself.

Nature must be recognized in such a way that in Persephone — or the Being who was still seen in the early Middle Ages when they spoke of 'Nature' — it reveals the Divine Spiritual, original and eternal Force out of which it originated and continually originates, as the foundation of earthly human existence.

The world of Man must be so recognized that in Christ it reveals the original and eternal Logos who works for the unfolding of the Spirit-being of man in the sphere of the Divine Spiritual Being bound up with man from the Beginning.

To turn the human heart in love to these great cosmic facts: this is the true content of the festival of remembrance which approaches man each year when he contemplates the cosmic Initiation-Night of Christmas. If love such as this lives in human hearts, it permeates the cold light-element of the Spiritual Soul with warmth. Were the Spiritual Soul obliged to remain without such permeation, man would never become filled with the Spirit. He would die in the cold of the intellectual consciousness; or he would have to remain in a mental life that did not progress to the unfolding of the conscious Spiritual Soul. He would then come to a stop with the unfolding of the Intellectual or Mind-Soul. But in its essential nature the Spiritual Soul is not cold. It seems to be so only at the commencement of its unfolding, because at that stage it can only reveal the light-element in its nature, and not as yet the cosmic warmth in which it has indeed its origin.

To feel and experience Christmas in this way will enable the soul to realize *how the glory of the Divine-Spiritual Beings, whose images are revealed in the Stars, announces itself to man, and how*

man's liberation takes place, within the precincts of the Earth, from the Powers which wish to alienate him from his origin.

(Christmas, 1924)

Further Leading Thoughts issued from the Goetheanum for the Anthroposophical Society (in connection with the foregoing Christmas Study)

137. The activity in the evolution of the World and Mankind which comes about through the forces of Michael, repeats itself rhythmically, though in ever-changing and progressing forms, before the Mystery of Golgotha and after.

138. The Mystery of Golgotha is the greatest event, occurring once and for all in the evolution of mankind. Here there can be no question of a rhythmic repetition. For while the evolution of mankind also stands within a mighty cosmic rhythm, still it is one — one vast member in a cosmic rhythm. Before it became this One, mankind was something altogether different from mankind; afterwards it will again be altogether different. Thus there are many Michael events in the evolution of mankind, but there is only one event of Golgotha.

139. In the quick rhythmic repetition of the seasons of the year, the Divine-Spiritual Being which descended into the depths of Earth to permeate Nature's process with the Spirit, accomplishes this process. It is the ensouling of Nature with the Forces of the Beginning and of Eternity which must remain at work; even as Christ's descent is the ensouling of Mankind with the Logos of the Beginning and of Eternity, whose working for the salvation of mankind shall never cease.

From: The Spirit of the Circling Stars by Adam Bittleston, Chapter VI, *The Passion*

.....Before the deed of Golgotha, the wisest human beings had regarded the earth as a region of illusion, in which no enduring reality could be found. With all love for the beauty and goodness of the earth, they could only say that her heart, her essence, was not to be found here; the poet of the *Atharva Veda*, with all his joyous appreciation of the world around him had to say, "O earth who hast thy heart in the highest heaven". Plato had to use the grim picture of the cave in which slaves are bound, looking at flickering shadows, seeing nothing of the clear sunlight outside. This, he thought, was the situation of earthly man, seeing no direct rays at all from the being of pure goodness. And the hankering of souls after death for earthly things seemed all the more hopeless, because the philosopher recognized these things to be quite empty illusions.

It is no superficial comparison when Plato describes the being of goodness as like the sun, for the sun is regarded as three-fold. Men know the external radiance of the sun and can come to feel the Godlike power which impels it upon its course—so thought the Greeks. These are two levels on which men can learn about the sun. The highest level and the most mysterious, is the dwelling-place of that Spirit who can be called the very Idea of Goodness itself.

The Deed of Golgotha is the entry into all earthly beings by the Spirit to whom men had looked in ancient times as Lord of the highest kingdom of the Sun, the far-distant bearer of enduring reality. In Christ's deed, the Being of Goodness comes down himself into the cave; not only a messenger, as Plato thought might be possible, but the Sun itself.

Henceforth those things are a success, and those things are enduring, which are inwardly connected with the Mystery of Golgotha. A defeat can be the most lasting victory, if it is really endured in the purposes of Christ. But our aims and our failures have to be tested by the deeds

which make up the Passion of Christ Jesus. We may have to say: "What was intended for motives of too personal a kind, perhaps out of ambition, or wish for security—we accept that this should be swept away in the changing stream of time." St. Paul taught his Corinthians that they might have to see that some things had been built by them only out of straw. Yet this very recognition helps us to see that some things do last; that some deeds of earth are at the same time deeds of spirit, building in materials which no storm can destroy. When we have died, we shall be able to look back at those actions which were done in the spirit of the Mystery of Golgotha, and know: from every level of existence these will be seen to keep their reality—they are part of what is most real in the universe.

From: From Jesus to Christ, Lectures VI and VII, Oct. 10 and 11, 1911 in Karlsruhe, Germany.

When we review the very simplest spiritual-scientific truths, we know that man consists of physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego. If now you ask someone who has studied Spiritual Science a little, but not very thoroughly, whether he knows the physical body of man, he will be sure to answer: 'I know it quite well, for I see it when a person stands before me. The other members are supersensible, invisible, and one cannot see them, but the physical human body I know quite well.' **Is it really the physical body of man that appears before our eyes when we meet a man with our ordinary vision?** I ask you, who without clairvoyant vision has ever seen a physical human body? What is it that people have before them if they see only with physical eyes and physical understanding? A human body, but one consisting of physical body, etheric body, astral body, and Ego. And when a man stands before us, it is as an organized assembly of physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego. It would make as little sense to say that a physical body stood before us as it would if, when giving someone a glass of water, we were to say, 'There is hydrogen in that glass.' Water consists of hydrogen and oxygen, as man consists of physical, etheric and astral bodies, and Ego. Their assemblage is visible, just as water is, but the hydrogen and oxygen are not. Anyone who said he saw hydrogen in the water would be obviously mistaken. So is anyone who thinks he sees the physical body when he sees a man in the physical world. What he normally sees is not a physical human body, but a four-membered being. He sees the physical body only in so far as it is permeated by the other members of the human being. And it is then changed in the same way that hydrogen is changed when it is permeated with oxygen in water.....

The observation of the physical human body, in itself, belongs to the most difficult clairvoyant problems, the hardest of all! Suppose we allow the external world to perform on man the experiment which is similar to the disintegration of water into hydrogen and oxygen. In death this experiment is performed by the great world. We then see how man lays aside his physical body. But does he really lay aside his physical body? The question seems absurd, for what could be clearer than the apparent fact that at death man lays aside his physical body? But what is it that he lays aside? It is something no longer imbued with the physical body's most important possession during life: **its Form**. Directly after death the Form begins to withdraw from the dead body. We are left with decaying substances, no longer characterized by the Form. The body laid aside is composed of substances and elements which we can trace also in Nature; in the natural order of things they would not produce a human Form. Yet this Form belongs quite essentially to the physical body.the more clairvoyance is developed in our time, the clearer will it be that the physical forces and substances laid aside are not the whole physical body, for its complete configuration could never derive from them alone. To these substances and forces there belongs something else, best called the 'Phantom' of the man. This Phantom is the Form-shape which as a

spiritual texture works up the physical substances and forces so that they fill out the Form which we encounter as the man on the physical plane. The sculptor can bring no statue into existence if he merely takes marble or something else, and strikes away wildly so that single pieces spring off just as the substance permits. As the sculptor must have the 'thought' which he impresses on the substance, so is a 'thought' related to the human body: not in the same way as the thought of the artists, for the material of the human body is not marble or plaster, but as a real thought, the Phantom, in the external world. Just as the thought of the plastic artist is stamped upon his material, so the Phantom of the physical body is stamped upon the substances of the earth which we see given over after death to the grave or the fire. The Phantom belongs to the physical body as its enduring part, a more important part than the external substances.....

If you think more deeply, can you believe that all the work of the great Divine Spirits through the Saturn, Sun and Moon periods has merely created something which is handed over at death to the elements of the Earth? No—that which was developed during the Saturn, Sun and Moon periods is not the physical body that is laid aside at death. It is the Phantom, the Form, of the physical body.....If the Lucifer force has not been introduced into our astral body and Ego, this dense materiality would not have become as visible as it has become. Hence, we have to represent man as an invisible being, made visible in matter only through forces which entered into him under the influence of Lucifer. Through this influence external substances and forces are drawn into the domain of the Phantom and permeate it. As when we pour a colored fluid into a transparent glass, so that the glass looks colored, so we can imagine that the Lucifer influence poured forces into the human Phantom, with the result that man was adapted for taking in on Earth requisite substances and forces which make his Form visible. Otherwise, his physical body would have remained always invisible.

.....What the Divine Spirits prepared, belongs to the physical body as a form-body which permeates, and at the same time holds together, the material parts that are woven into our physical body. If no Luciferic influence had intervened, then, at the beginning of his Earth-existence, man would have received this Phantom in full strength together with his physical body. But into the human organization, insofar as it consists of physical body, etheric body and astral body, the Luciferic influence penetrated, and the consequence was the disorganization of the Phantom of the physical body. As we shall see, this is symbolically expressed in the Bible as the Fall, together with the fact, related in the Old Testament, that death followed the Fall. Death was indeed the result of the disorganization of the Phantom of the physical body. This crumbling physical body, lacking the strength of the Phantom, is indeed borne by man from birth to death. The crumbling away goes on all the time, and the decomposition, the death of the physical body, is only the final stage of a continuous process. For if the disintegration of the body—preceded by the disorganization of the Phantom—is not countered by processes of reconstruction, death finally ensues.

If no Luciferic influence had come in, the destructive and reconstructive forces in the physical body would have remained in balance.

.....Let us think of the body of Christ that rose out of the grave. Just as from the body of Adam the bodies of earth-men are descended, insofar as these men have the body that crumbles away, even so are the spiritual bodies, the Phantoms for all men, descended from that which rose out of the grave. And it is possible to establish a relationship with Christ through which an earthly human being can bring into his otherwise decaying physical body this Phantom which rose out of the grave of Golgotha. It is possible for man to receive into his organism those forces which then rose from the grave, just as through his physical organism at the beginning of the earth evolution, as a consequence of the Luciferic forces, he received the organism of Adam.

It is this that Paul wishes to say. Just as man, through his place in the stream of physical evolution, inherits the physical body in which the destruction of the Phantom, the force-bearer, is gradually taking place, so from the pure Phantom that rose out of the grave he can inherit what he has lost. He can inherit it, he can clothe himself with it, as he clothed himself with the first Adam; he can become one with it. Thereby he can go through a development by means of which he can climb upwards again, even as before the Mystery of Golgotha he had descended in evolution. In other words, that which had been taken from him through the Luciferic influence can be given back to him through its presence as the Risen Body of Christ. That is what Paul wishes to say.

.....That which came into the world with Christianity must therefore not be regarded merely as a new teaching—and not as a new theory, but as something real, something factual. Hence when people insist that everything Christ taught had been known previously, this signifies nothing for a real understanding of Christianity. The important thing is not what Christ taught, but what he gave: his Body. For the Body that rose from the grave of Golgotha had never before entered into human evolution. Never before had there been present on earth, through the death of a man, that which came to be present as the Risen Body of the Christ Jesus. Previously, after men had passed through the gate of death, and had gone through the period between death and a new birth, they had brought to earth with them the defective Phantom, given over to deterioration. No one had ever caused a perfect Phantom to arise.....For the important thing is not what Christ Jesus taught, but what He gave to humanity. His Resurrection is the coming to birth of a new member of human nature—an incorruptible body.....



Resurrection panel from the Isenheim altar
by Matthias Grünewald, 1512-1516

We will use the Ascension/Whitsun issue of the Newsletter to highlight summer courses and activities. Please submit any announcements to groh.alice@gmail.com by May 1st in order to be included. Whitsun is Sunday, May 23rd this year and the Newsletter will probably go out the week between Ascension and Whitsun.