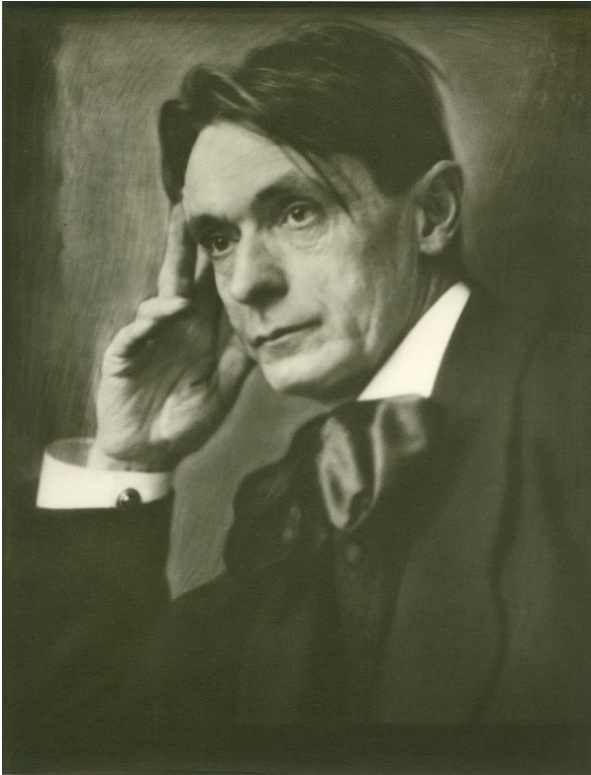


RUDOLF STEINER - (ON) APOCALYPTIC WRITINGS

Lecture – 1



Berlin, 10 October 1904

In the last lecture, I spoke of the stages of man's development at which he becomes capable of speaking of an "apocalypse" and moreover, of proclaiming one himself. I said that the gaze of the seer must range over such vast epochs that he surveys the time before man began to pass through incarnations as an individual, as well as the epochs which preceded these journeys through births and deaths. I also said that before this vision is possible, the Chela (disciple) must have attained the third degree of Chelaship. This also applies to the Apocalypse of St.

John. The vision of one who surveys the world in this way does not differ from that of other Initiates. You must realise at the outset that such visions or higher experiences (or whatever they may be called) do not differ from each other. Strange as it may seem to one who is not an initiate, if for example, reference is made to the four Beasts, the account given by one Initiate will not differ from that given by another. Two Initiates will not give different accounts of the same thing. In order to give you a picture, I shall speak of what any Initiate of this degree experiences in regard to the evolutionary path of mankind.

The Initiate who communicated what is contained in the Apocalypse, surveyed the epoch which preceded that of our present Root Race, surveyed the two human races preceding our own, surveyed the time when man first assumed his present form in the middle of the Lemurian Race, surveyed too the life that stretches

beyond birth and death. Before that point of time in the middle of the Lemurian epoch, the constitution of man was quite different from that of the human being who stands before us today. I will start from a quite definite point. Man of the present day consists, as you know, of seven bodies: the physical body, the etheric body, the astral body, and four others. We are concerned here with the three lower bodies only. There is the physical body which is perceived with the ordinary senses, and then the etheric body which is not perceived by these senses. The etheric body can be perceived by those who have acquired the requisite faculty, by suggesting away the physical body of the human being concerned. They then see in space a "double" of the man. The color of this "double" is more or less that of peach blossom. Embedded as it were in this "double" is the astral body, a shining oval. When a human being dies today, the higher bodies, including the etheric body, rise out of the physical body. During the period immediately following death, the astral body is still united with the etheric body. After a few days the astral body leaves the etheric body and begins to traverse the path it must take between death and a new birth. The position of the etheric body today is only that of a mediator between the activity of the astral body and the physical body. In man's present earthly existence, it is the physical body that is of the greatest significance for him. The physical brain is the instrument for man's highest spiritual activity. The etheric body is the mediator, the connecting link between the activity of the higher bodies and the physical body. There was no dissolving of this connecting link in the first two Races nor in the early part of the third Race.

In the so-called Polarian Race (the first Root Race) the etheric body was the most important, Man's whole body at that time consisted of fine etheric substance. Only later did the etheric body densify by permeating itself with physical matter. At the end of the first Root Race, man was not fettered to the ground as he is today. He hovered through the etheric earth, and his organs too, were etheric. He was an etheric being. By the time of Lemuria, through gradual densification, he took on physical corporeality. But even in the middle of the Lemurian epoch, he was not as dense a being as he is today. At the beginning of the third Root Race (Lemurian), matter was just a little denser than that of cloud-formations over mountains today. It was into these "fire-clouds" that men incarnated at that time. Hence the Beings who came as the highest

Intelligences from other realms to the earth to be teachers of men, are called "Sons of the Fire-Mist."

When the geologist takes us back to a certain age in the earth's history when physical remains of human beings are no longer to be found, all physical traces are lost. This is because at a certain period man consisted of such fine, rarefied matter that no physical traces exist in the earth's earlier strata.

In order to have an expression in our language for the transition from the fine, etheric matter to physical matter, of those beings who developed to physical density, the esotericist speaks of the Eagle stage of man. Physical man in that epoch is called the Eagle. In the language of esotericism, the Eagle is the man of the Lemurian Race who works his way from etheric matter into dense, solid matter.

The Lemurian Race is followed by the Atlantean Race. In this Atlantean Race, man was, at first, endowed with a somewhat denser etheric body. At that time he was still able to control the living seed-forces of the plants. By means of the Prana (life-force) of plants he propelled the airships in Atlantis described by Scott-Elliott. This shows us that in that epoch man had greater power over his etheric body (etheric "double") than he has today. Later on, man will achieve mastery over the still higher bodies. This process which is an actual and real process, is described by the Apocalypticist in detail. The second stage, where man still had mastery over his etheric body is designated by the esoteric expression: the stage of the Lion Man. The Lion Man is a technical expression for the Atlantean. Then comes the man of the Fifth Root Race, the Aryan Race, who is designated by the word "Bull" because it is paramountly the physical forces that come to expression.

These three designations: Eagle, Lion, Bull, apply to definite and successive stages of the evolution of Humanity. One who is initiated in certain Mystery Schools learns to understand a certain language and script, in which those who have knowledge of the all-embracing truths express their experiences. It is a language which all Initiates on the earth write and speak, a symbolic language, a symbolic form of speech. Everyone who has learned it, understands it, and when he finds a particular sign in ancient records knows that it has a definite meaning. In the course of some of these lectures, I shall speak of some of these signs, of the most elementary of them. A sign frequently used to designate these stages of human evolution is that of two interlacing triangles which

together form a six-sided figure. Below lies a triangle which symbolises the previous conditions. The three angles are not filled; they signify the three original conditions of man. In the middle is the real man. This enduring entity which passes through the incarnations remains through all the stages. That is what is designated as Man. So, here you have the four modes of being through which man becomes man in the course of his evolution. They are indicated in the two interlacing triangles. If you study this sign you will understand why these four Beasts are mentioned whenever an Apocalypticist is speaking about these stages of evolution. They also appear in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. In the Apocalypse of St. John they are described in a very special way. An Apocalypticist pierces the veils which separate man from the regions in which he can behold those earlier stages of evolution. Other organs must develop in man before he can really see what has formerly happened on the earth. The stages of evolution through which man has passed and which have become invisible to him, of which he is no longer conscious, must again become living reality to him. Thus in an Apocalypticist the etheric body must have been kindled to life, he must begin actually to see; his whole being must become an "eye." Therefore the Apocalypticist must be able not only to transfer himself back into the stages of Eagle, of Lion, of Bull, but he must do so as a Seer. And at the third stage of Initiation the Chela actually acquires this power of vision. What I have here described is to be found in the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse of St. John. The Apocalypse describes not only the past stages of human evolution but the future stages as well. To understand these future stages a man must be able, as a seer, to use the forces of the etheric body and of the higher bodies which, in the course of evolution, have fallen into disuse. The man of the Fifth Root Race can only move freely, can only be conscious of himself, in the physical body. But he develops in such a way that later on he can become conscious in the higher bodies. In the present sub-race of the Fifth Root Race we have achieved a very deep development, namely that of the physical intellect. Our present sub-race (the fifth) will be followed by the sixth sub-race and that again by the seventh. That will bring our Fifth Root Race to an end. It will be followed by another, higher Root Race, and that again by another. This evolution therefore consists in the fact that man learns more and more to use his higher bodies. We are moving towards a very definite goal, for we are on the way from

the fifth to the Sixth Root Race. Man now uses his physical intellect for everything; he adopts a definite moral teaching, and a religion. This governs him because the physical intellect holds sway. The individual has inevitably to seek his well-being, his happiness, at the expense of others. An individual who strives for higher development endeavors to transcend, to rise above the conditions of everyday life.

In occult schools, three words are used to characterise the New Age, the age of the new, later human race. In the domain of communal life, the word is "brotherhood," brotherly love. That is why the Theosophical Society has taken Universal Brotherhood as the main principle in its declared objects, because it is the aim of the Theosophical Society to make preparations for life in the Sixth Race. Man will then feel happy only when happiness is not acquired, at the expense of others. That is true morality.

Our science is materialistic. This will be different in the next sub-race. We are striving for a different form of science, namely for "pneumatology." Teaching concerning the spirit, the spiritual, will be dominant in the new race.

And in the sphere of religion the ruling principle will be something that is not yet possible today, because the intellect lies in the way. Man will himself perceive the existence of a Divine World-Spirit. That is the free religious principle of the next race. Brotherly Love, Pneumatology, Self-Authority in religious matters, these three principles will characterise the future race which is slowly being prepared within our own life. A Seventh Race will take on quite different forms of life, of which we will speak on another occasion. Christianity was born in the fourth sub-race. This sub-race was preceded by the third. In certain time-cycles, what has already transpired, is recapitulated. The first three sub-races recapitulate, briefly, the stages of Eagle, Lion, and Bull. These were preparatory races, whereas the real task of the race emerged in the fourth sub-race, which is designated by the expression Man, or God becomes Man. Christianity arose in the fourth sub-race. The fifth sub-race, our present one, began about the middle of the Middle Ages. It is what we call, speaking in the widest sense, the Germanic sub-race. It separated out from the so-called Latin Race. This term was taken to include everything into which the stream of Christianity flowed and which developed gradually in the spiritual life of Europe. This fourth sub-race was preceded by the three other sub-races in which the earlier were briefly recapitulated.

In the Apocalypse, these seven conditions or stages are designated by the seven "Churches" or Communities. The Communities are the representatives of the seven sub-races. The words spoken to the Communities of Ephesus, Smyrna and so on, are directed to the different sub-races. Members of the various races are still living in the world; members of the first sub-race of the Fifth Root Race still survive. The Indian people belong, fundamentally, to this sub-race. The original Indian peoples brought the culture of Thought to expression in the very highest sense. The highest sublimation of Thought came to expression in ancient India. This first sub-race recapitulated, briefly, the development of Lemurian man, who was a man of "feeling." The members of our present race (Aryan) are men of "thinking."

Memory developed for the first time in Atlantis. The Lemurian had no memory. In the first sub-race (Indian), man did indeed think, but his thinking was a kind of feeling, and what he thought comes to expression in the old Vedic civilisation. You read Vedic literature aright if, as you read, you get the impression that thought is basking in a wonder-world of feeling. In civilisations where memory comes more to the help of the thoughts, where outer customs then retain this memory-culture in the worship of ancient heroes, where the memory of a great inventor, or discoverer, or king is established as a principle of the moral life, where long lists of names and data are compiled; in these civilisations there arose the rudiments of the Calendar. Much was noted down in the early races by the ancient Indians and the Persian Magi. And from these memoranda arose the first beginnings of the Calendar.

The men of today have developed from these early sub-races. Man has progressed to the fifth sub-race because he has realised that the Divine is within himself, because he has understood the Apocalyptic progression.

But the first sub-race, which becomes articulate in the Vedas, could also most easily succumb to error. Feeling was not yet strong enough to enable Thought to become inward in the real sense. And so in Indian Culture, two aspects are apparent. On the one side we have the sublime ideas of spiritual Divinities contained in ancient Vedic Culture, that wondrous religion, of which those who do not really know it, can form no conception; neither can they form any conception of the profundities of the Vedanta. All this is spiritual teaching of a parity and clarity of which it is said in Europe, and rightly said, that every time one plunges into these depths, having

schooled oneself to remain still and tranquil in soul, they are ever and again a source of new wonderment. The wonderment that may be aroused by our modern life fades into nothingness in the face of what ancient Indian Culture has to offer. But on the other side, the Indian peoples lapsed into idolatry in its very crudest form. What is usually to be found in books on ancient Indian Culture is a jumble of ideas of gods and religious conceptions, and gives no true picture. Sharp distinction must be made between the idolatry prevailing among the people and the sublime, majestic spirit-world of the Brahmans. The great light-sides of the life of humanity always have their shadow-sides. Then in whose nation or race there have been individuals of high spiritual development have often themselves persisted in clinging to externalities.

In the Letter to the Community of Ephesus, the Apocalypse tries to give a picture of these phenomena. On the one side there are those who have kept their "first love," and on the other, those who have abandoned the works of their "first love" and have fallen to a lower level. The Nicolaitanes are referred to as those who regard external things as man's one and only goal. Monumental words must be addressed to those who live in such a Community.

I wished only to show how events of world importance are touched upon in this passage of the Letter to the Community of Ephesus which stands as the representative of these conditions. Quotation from **Rev. 2:1-7**: Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labors, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars; And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God

Lecture – II

Berlin, 17 October 1904

Today we will continue our study of the Apocalypse. Anyone who desires to understand the whole meaning and spirit of a work like the Apocalypse must, above all, have a clear idea of how the religions work, and of how Christianity too worked at the beginning, that is to say, what forces made it possible for Christianity, like the other religious systems, to pour the life of the Spirit in might and glory over mankind.

The belief is all too widespread today that plain, simple words, comprehensible to everybody, must contain the truth, and there is a certain disinclination to raise the spirit to the heights of thought, to the heights of supersensible vision. People are averse to this. We often hear it said, even by theologians, that whatever cannot be clothed in the simplest words which everyone can understand, can be of little service to truth. Anyone who holds this view will be incapable of understanding the meaning and spirit of a work like the Apocalypse or the mystical Gospel of St. John. There is nothing to be said against the justness of the saying that truth must be made known in simple words, for one who would proclaim truth must find ways to speak to the simplest hearts, they must find words in which to speak to those who stand at the heights of science, culture and education, as well as to those who go by the name of the "simple" folk. But the power, the inner force cannot find expression in homely, simple words. This power issues from the supreme heights of spiritual life.

Christianity, too, in the early centuries, had Mystery Centers, places of Initiation, where not only simple words, universally comprehensible teachings were given, but the revelations of spiritual vision at its highest level were made known. In the Gospel of St. John this spiritual vision extends to the realms where space and time no longer mean anything. Those who did not participate in the Mysteries were not all of them capable of speaking of these revelations of the highest realms of the spiritual world. Therefore the Church Father or Teacher of the first Christian centuries found popular, simple words through which to find access to the hearts of the unlearned folk. He himself had within him the power, the force belonging to the proclamation from the heights of spiritual life.

There is some indication of this in the Apocalypse itself. You only

need to read with understanding the most significant passages in the Apocalypse and you will find that what is drawn down from the heights of spirit has been gathered into a great, all-embracing picture of the world. Quotation from **Rev. 1:9**: "I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day ..." He says that he was on the island of Patmos, meaning a place of initiation, and received this revelation. And he had received it "in the spirit." In other places he speaks a little differently. At the beginning of the fourth chapter, he says, "After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, "Come up hither and I will show thee things which must be hereafter ..."

The first three chapters contain the gist of what I tried to convey briefly in the last lecture. But then comes a description of the destiny of the Root Race which will follow our own. That is why the Apocalypse makes a clear distinction between the two kinds of vision, Inspiration and Intuition. A lower form of Intuition suffices when it is a matter of making known the destiny of a former Root Race, but a higher form of Intuition is necessary in order to see what will come to pass after our own Root Race, for example, during the sixth and seventh Root Races. This lies beyond the range of the vision upon which the first three chapters are based and can only be revealed to the seer when he ascends to Devachan. The destiny of a Root Race never unrolls before us in the region of astral vision, however highly developed. Therefore the Apocalyptist says that he heard the voice "in the spirit." Up to the end of the third chapter of the Apocalypse, we have to do with higher astral vision; from the fourth chapter onwards, with Devachanic vision.

The Initiates of all epochs speak as St. John, the writer of the Apocalypse speaks. But the Apocalypse of St. John differs in one respect from other profound writings of Initiates. The standpoint is different. The theologian, John, speaks in the Apocalypse as a Christian, from the Christian standpoint. Therefore anyone who desires to read the Apocalypse with true insight, with right feeling, must steep himself not merely in the theological but in the human attitude and feeling of a deeply initiated Christian who has himself experienced the full power of the Christian revelation.

A significant saying is to be found in the first Epistle of St. John.

Quotation from **1 John 5:7,8**: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the word and the Holy Ghost ... And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water and the blood ..."

The three principles that "bear record in heaven" are known to the theosophist as Atma, Buddhi and Manas. The Christian calls the three principles which underlie the world: Father, Word and Holy Spirit.

A Christian of the first centuries would have refrained from speaking of the Father. "No one cometh to the Father save through Me." These words were uttered by the great Christian Master Himself, by Him through Whom Christianity itself came into the world. I am now speaking entirely in the sense in which an initiated Christian of the first period of Christianity would have spoken. He believed in the Father and he believed that he could come to know the Father only through the Word.

And what was the Word? It is only possible to convey to the non-initiate a feeble idea of what an initiated Christian of the first centuries called the "Word" and even then, it can be done only by means of a comparison. The highest to which man can raise himself, is the Thought. Man raises himself through Thoughts to life in Devachan. He lives in Devachan. Only, he is not conscious of it. The characteristic of earthly man is that he lives simultaneously in three worlds: the physical world, the astral world, and the Devachanic world. But he is conscious of himself only in the physical world. The highest manifestation which can exist in the world was for all religions, and also for Christianity in its earliest form, the world-creative Will. And when the Christian says anything at all about the Father, It is always in the sense that the Father is the world-creative, universal Will. When man desires to bring the highest that is in him, the Devachanic, the Thought, to expression through the Will, that is, through the world-creative principle, then this is done, in the first place, through Speech. The Word is, in man, the announcer of the Spirit through the Will. And so the early Christian said: everything that constitutes our world is apprehended in the highest sense through the Word, but now through the Word that has come into being through the Highest, world-creative Will, just as man brings the highest that is in him to expression in the words, through the power of will. And so the Christian said, "The Father brought His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to expression through the power of the WORD." Hence it is written in

the Gospel, "All things were made by the Word, and without the Word was not anything made that was made."

The Third Person is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the same for the Cosmic All as the spirit of the individual man is for man. The Spirit descends in the Cosmic Word. If the Christian wanted to picture this to himself, he said, "Just as when a man speaks, his words sound forth into the air setting the air into wave-movement, and his thought lives further in the waves of the air, just as the word is the embodiment of the human spirit, so is the world the embodiment of the Divine Word." Everything was made through the Word and without the Word nothing was made that was made. Therewith it is affirmed that the essential, basic principle is the highest that man can see embodied in the world. This is the Word, and this Word is designated as the Second Divine Person, or as the Son of God, as the Highest Being, not as an abstract image of the World-soul conceived in a pantheistic sense, but as a Being far more personal and individual than the human personality, the human individuality. It must be firmly held in mind that "the Word" is an expression for the Highest Being, through Whom the entire universe works, just as man can see with eyes, hear with ears, apprehend with the intellect. That Being, for the early Christians, became Man, in Him Whom they recognised as the Proclaimer of the Gospel.

Thus for the early Christians, the Event in Palestine was of cosmic significance. He Who walked in Palestine was, for the first Christians, not a man as other men. For them He was the Word made Flesh, the One Who in the great Universe can be seen with eyes, heard with ears, grasped with the understanding, and this infinite Being had come in the form of a man. Whoever does not apprehend this, whoever tries to twist the meaning of the God made Flesh, this Word which is the God become Flesh, whoever does not hold the view that here was the Incarnation of God in Jesus, cannot really understand the mind and thought of the first Christians. He was in very truth a unique Personality. The Gospel expresses this, too, in a glorious, most powerful way. For those who can read aright, the Gospel clearly indicates the fact that the Christian Initiate ascended to Devachanic vision. In order fully to understand Christianity, however, I beg you to consider the following.

In the narrative of the life of Jesus and of the life of Buddha there is great similarity. This similarity in the Annunciation, in the years

of teaching, and so forth, has often been stressed. The mystic understands the reason for this similarity because he knows that such a life repeats itself in certain epochs of human evolution. But in the Christ life there is something else something essentially different from the Buddha-life, and the first Christian Initiates understood this. If you follow the life of Jesus, you come to the event described as the Transfiguration. Jesus went with His disciples Peter, John and James to the mountain and was transfigured; He was illumined from within, and Moses and Elias appeared on either side of Him. The disciples then received significant revelations. This is an indication of a moment of supreme importance. Moses and Elias appear on either side of Christ Jesus. Time is transcended, the Past has become Present. So it is in Devachan. In the physical world we have space and time. In the astral world we have only time. In the Devachanic world, however, there is no time, no space. Moses and Elias, long since passed away, are immediately present. This means, therefore, that at the Transfiguration the three disciples, Peter, James and John were transported into the state of Devachanic vision. Following the Transfiguration we first come to what is significant. It is the actual sacrificial death, the suffering, the dying, which do not occur in the life of Buddha. Buddha went out with his disciple Ananda and became Illumined. When the scene is described in the life of Buddha it is given a different form, adapted to the understanding of the people. The Transfiguration, however, comes at the end of Buddha's life, whereas the really significant epoch in the life of Jesus begins with this event. Therewith is indicated Christ's teaching concerning all the old religious systems of the previous sub-races of the Fifth Root Race. Christ wished to say, "We understand the prophecies, the previous proclamations in the old religious systems of what the Gospel now proclaims, we recognise that in the ancient Mysteries the word of truth was taught and revealed." But one thing has become reality through Christianity. And that is expressed by the words: Blessed are they who do not see and yet believe. This epitomizes the great, world-historic significance of Christianity in its Gospel. What was formerly attained through Initiation by a few chosen ones in the seclusion of the Mystery-Temples, attained through vision of the great cosmic truths within the hidden crypts of the Mystery-Centers, could now be attained by those who had not actual vision but who were able to believe with inner freedom of soul. Therefore, what formerly took

place in concealment, in the seclusion of the Mysteries, the supreme Mystery wherein man himself goes through the gate of death in order to rise again in a higher life, this deepest of all Mystery-secrets which a non-initiate cannot understand in its true significance, this was enacted on the great stage of outer world-existence. What came to pass in Palestine, came to pass as actual, historic fact, following in every detail the sacred acts which had formerly taken place in Mystery-rites. The rites of sacrifice and the sacrificial death were constantly repeated, in the Mysteries. But the old Mystery-teachings had to be presented to the world, in a more popular form. Therewith a further step was achieved through Christianity, a step forward, in the understanding of an early Christian Initiate, a step which leads man beyond the stage to which the old religions could have led him.

Who were the old religious Teachers? They were Teachers of mankind. What they taught, that was the important thing. It was the actual teachings of Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, Hermes, Pythagoras, Lao-tze, it was the words themselves that were all important. These Teachers stood as it were on high mountain and from there proclaimed the Most Holy Word. But something else was possible. The WORD Itself descended and took on human form. Henceforward it was not a question of what was proclaimed, but what was lived, lived in the very deepest sense. The goal was fulfilled. In ancient times the path for our Fifth Root Race was outlined. The teachings and commandments, the truths given by the old founders of religions, Lao-tze, Confucius, Moses, Buddha, were given for this purpose. But the WORD Itself came down in fleshly form and lived among us. The Threefold utterance became reality: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. The Christian Initiate indicated what I have said in words of great profundity. All the Founders of ancient religions were regarded as embodied Angels, messengers of the Godhead. "Angel" means the Messenger of the Godhead. But now there came One before Whom the Angels veiled their countenances in veneration and laid themselves at the feet of the Mystical Lamb, at the feet of the God made Flesh. The Mystery is that the Lamb Who became flesh denoted a deeper descent into humanity, a life among men. The earlier Teachers had proclaimed the Word from the mountain top. But Christ came down into the valley, lived as Man among men. He did not command what is to be done; He did not merely proclaim truths but in his very life He made manifest the Word. For the Christians, this was what

distinguished his religion from the other religions. This was what brought him to the core and center of what the Christian Initiate proclaims as the Apocalypse, or the secret revelation. We will speak next time of why the Word made Flesh was also called the Lamb. It will have become clear to us that the Lamb must be regarded as the central figure in the Apocalypse, and that only through the Lamb can the future of Humanity be made known. In the 4th chapter of the Apocalypse, where the man is led out, where the heaven opens, the truths of the higher world are announced to him. It is the Mystical Lamb Who opens the Seals of the World. Here is encountered the now transfigured Flesh. Hence the question: What is revealed to a man who has passed beyond the heights of Christian astral vision? The Mystical Lamb is revealed to him. The Devachanic world lies open before him and then he is able to unveil the innermost secret which must be revealed when the time is fulfilled, i. e., when the 7th sub-race of our Fifth Root Race is completed and a new race of mankind, together with a new stage of evolution is at hand.

Thus we have in the Apocalypse a description of the Destiny of the 5th sub-race and of the beginnings of a new configuration of the world, characterised by the words: Pneumatology, Communal life based on love, Morality.

This world is announced in the secret that is revealed through the opening of the seven seals, revealed through Him Who made the fulfilment of this secret possible, in that He came among men. And He will fulfil it when the time is ripe, when our Root Race has become ready to pass over into that world and to attain the stage of evolution designated by these three words: Pneumatology, Communal life based on love, Morality.

Such are the depths from which the content of the Apocalypse must be drawn. This does not imply that true Christianity can be drawn only from these depths. But true Christianity must be permeated by fire, and man can only kindle this fire in himself when he draws its force from higher vision. In Christianity, the fruit of this higher vision is the Apocalypse.

Lecture – III

Berlin, 24 October 1904

Before I go further in the explanation of apocalyptic writings, I must again repeat that this explanation can be of real value only to those who have been in the Theosophical Movement for a considerable time and who approach the theosophical view of the world with a certain sympathetic understanding. A great deal will have to be said here that may well cause opponents to attribute all kinds of phantastic things to Theosophy, and which, to begin with, will be regarded by rationalistic thinkers as so much brain-spinning. Familiarity with the nature of theosophical thought and feeling is essential if what is said in connection with the Apocalypse is not to be misunderstood.

What I have said about the relation of Christianity to Jesus [the] Christ and about the relation of the writer of the Apocalypse to Jesus must be kept firmly in mind if we are to understand what follows.

The keystone for a true understanding of the place of Christianity in the world lies in the saying: Blessed are those who believe even though they do not see.

As I have already said, the significance of this utterance lies in the fact that what formerly took place in the deep secrecy of the Mystery-Temples was carried through Christianity on to the great arena of the world. "This does not gainsay in the very slightest the historic actuality of the happenings in Palestine between the years 1 and 33 A.D. The standpoint of those who see to the root of these things will far rather be that the familiar Christian tradition is historic truth. In this respect, therefore, Theosophy is in agreement at every point with what Christians believe. But the historic fact at the beginning of our time-reckoning is something else as well, and we understand it rightly when we think of it as a mystical fact, when we realise that the way of the Passion, the Death, the Resurrection, the Ascension, are historic happenings which were formerly enacted in the Mysteries.

There is a word in the Bible which indicates how the ancient mystery is related to its own fulfilment, to Christianity. In Christianity, everything that pointed to Christ before His actual appearance is called: the Promise. Those who understand these things know that "Promise" means nothing else than that what

took place in Palestine had been "Promised" in the secrecy of the Mysteries. We can understand it from the very words of ancient scripts. Think only of the Mysteries of Greece. What was enacted in those Mysteries, in deep secrecy, and experienced only by the Initiates, was the Passion, Dying and Resurrection of the "Son of God." They experienced it through the preparation they had undergone, through their training on higher planes. Thus in the Mysteries the Initiate beheld the Passion, the Dying and the Resurrection of the Son of God. This was portrayed before their eyes of spirit. That is the Promise. And then this Promise was fulfilled – in Palestine. This is the explanation of the utterance: blessed not only are those who were seers in the Mysteries, but also those who are able to believe not merely in the Word revealed to the Mystics, but in the Word made Flesh. That is the meaning of this utterance. It is from this point of view that we must understand the relation in which John the Apocalyptist stands to the Mysteries of antiquity and to the Christian Mystery. Light will then be thrown on many a passage.

It is said in the Apocalypse that seven seals are opened. What does the opening of seals mean, in the language in which the Apocalypse is written?

Since time immemorial, the secret of the Sons of God becoming man was announced prophetically to the mystics. And in the language of the Apocalypse, the presentation of this secret on the physical plane is called the opening of a seal. In the language of occultism, the opening of a seal means nothing else than the proclamation of something that was formerly made known only to the Initiates and presented only within the Mysteries. The picture given is correct in its very details. What is later revealed was in earlier times beheld within the Mysteries. During the time of the Mysteries there was no book which recorded what happened in the Mysteries. This came only later. Such a book is the Gospel. The Gospel contains what was formerly presented in the Mysteries, and what is written there is "unsealed" for those who are ready for it. And who will be ready? Here is something that you must grasp in its whole setting in the Apocalypse. Something is proclaimed to seven Communities. You have heard that these seven Communities are representatives of the seven sub-races of the Fifth Root Race. Who, then, are the Proclaimers? And who are those to whom the proclamation is made? Here we must think from the esoteric point of view of the appearance of Christ as compared with other

appearances. (If you have read the last number of the magazine "Lucifer" you will there find something that I will now briefly repeat.)

The evolution of mankind stands under the direction of mighty Leaders who guide its onward progress. In the language of esotericism these Leaders are called Manus. A Manu, therefore, is the Being who at the beginning of a race gives the great impulse, the direction in which the race is to evolve. We are living now in the Fifth Root Race. When, after the destruction of the Fourth Root Race (the Atlantean) this Fifth Root Race began its development, the great impulse was given by the Manu of the Fifth Root Race. The Manu is not in the same sense a man among men as other outstanding human individualities. Even before mankind on the earth was filled with spirit, the Manu had already reached a lofty stage of development. It was in the Third Root Race, when in the middle of the Lemurian epoch the human spirit flashed up for the first time in the human body, that such leaders came to the human race. When men were young, when they were still children, they could not lead themselves. But their leaders were not of the same nature as themselves. These Beings who had already reached a higher stage of development in an evolution that is not that of man, were so advanced, that they could be leaders of the human race before the spirit had incarnated in the bodies of men.

These were superhuman Beings. These superhuman beings are of two kinds. The one kind, who were already leaders at the time when, in respect of the Spiritual, men were still children, these Beings had already advanced so far that they had reached a stage which will be reached by humanity only in the far distant future. These highly developed individualities, the Manus, are called in the language of esotericism, "the Holy Spirits."

The second category of Beings were already nearer to man's level, but still superhuman. They are called, "Sons of God." And the next group of individualities were those who were already men among men.

If we go back to the middle of the Lemurian epoch and survey man's whole evolution, we find three grades of individualities who have something to do with humanity. There is a group of very lofty individualities who long, long ago, in the far past, had already passed through the stages of evolution which man will attain only in the distant future. They are the "Holy Spirits." A second group are the "Sons of God." They stand nearer to man but are nevertheless

far more exalted than he. And the third group are those who, as human beings were still children, but were nevertheless the most advanced among those early men. They are the "Fathers" or "Pitris." We have therefore three grades of beings and these three grades of beings are the guides and leaders of mankind.

If we now go back once again to the beginning of the Fifth Root Race, we find the superhuman Manu, by whom the great impulse was given. But in the course of the Fifth Root Race, something very significant comes to pass, namely that in the course of the Fifth Root Race, men themselves progress so far that a few of them will be able to take into their hands the spiritual guidance of the human race. Those whom we call "Fathers" or "Elders," will then be able to guide and lead men as formerly they were led by the superhuman Beings. Thus the guidance and leadership of mankind passes over from the Manus to those who are "Human Brothers," "Brothers of Men."

The Holy Spirits, the Sons of God, the Fathers, become the leaders of the human race in the successive epochs of time. The "Fathers" are also called "Elders."

When the Word took on human form, so says the writer of the Apocalypse, this Word, the Logos, took on human form as the "Son," just as formerly the Word took on human form as a Spirit, or since Christian esotericism calls the Spirit "Angel," before the Word became Flesh, the Word was an "Angel." This is Christian esotericism. First, the Word or the Logos is an Angel, then the Word became Flesh as Son, and then the Word will become "Elder" or "Father." These are the successive stages. The Christian Initiates have always understood this. But their words must be rightly understood.

Paul, one of the greatest Christian Initiates, could only hint at these profound secrets. But he gave an indication of what I have just been saying. When the Word was still an Angel, the Word was still on the super-sensible plane. The Word is spoken from out of the clouds, from the supersensible, when Commandments are proclaimed. The age of the "Law" is the age of the "Promise." The time of the Law was when the Word was an Angel. Then the Word became Flesh and later on the Word will become "Elder" or "Father." Paul was an Initiate, and proclaimed this in the Epistle to the Galatians in the following words:

"The law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being

made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles, through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man annulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds as of many; but as of one and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot annul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one. Is the law then against the promise of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

Other passages, too, indicate that the Word was an Angel, but subsequently became Flesh. What happened through the Word becoming Flesh? It was proclaimed to the sub-races of the Fifth Root Race how they should develop on into the future. In the Letters to the seven Communities, the author of the Apocalypse indicates how evolution proceeds. Not all human beings reach the goal, not all those who have entered into this evolutionary process reach the goal in the due time. Something very significant comes to pass. In order to understand it aright, let us ask: How does the writer of the Apocalypse help us to understand the Fathers, the Elders? Do we find the Elders themselves in the Gospel? Yes, they are there at the time when the Angel has become the Son. At that time the Fathers are not yet ready to receive the Word into themselves. They must wait for a future time. In the age of the Promise, the Fathers have not progressed sufficiently. They will understand the Word only at the end of the Fifth Root Race, when within themselves as Fathers, they will understand what remained hidden from them at the time when Christ, their Master, was on earth. The twelve Disciples are Elders. They are destined again to come into the presence of Christ. Then, at the end of the Fifth Root Race, the Book that was given to them sealed, will be unsealed. Again something of particular significance comes to pass in

evolution. We are told what conditions will be when the Fifth Root Race has progressed, to the point where it must be decided whether the time has come for the transition into the Sixth Root Race. I shall merely indicate things upon which I will speak more fully in later lectures.

The coming of the Sixth Root Race is announced by the sounding of trumpets. Quote from Rev. IV;12 "And the fourth Angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third, part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

This refers to the third part that has remained behind, which however, need not have happened. The Letters to the Communities contain not only warnings and admonitions but also sharp reproof. Not all reach the goal. A third part (of humanity) falls away completely from evolution. We have therefore one third which will attain the goal, one third which lags behind, and one third which does not reach the goal and falls completely away. One third attains its goal, a second third will only later attain its goal, making together two thirds; and at the end of the Fifth Root Race, only one third of those who began evolution will have reached the necessary stage of development.

Seventy-two Elders were called upon to enter into evolution and to develop to further stages. The admonitions to the Communities which it devolved upon the Elders to lead, indicates that only a third reach the goal. If we take a third of 72 Elders, we have 24 Elders who will still be there when the seven seals of the Book are opened. This revelation of God's majesty is something which was proclaimed, by the appearance of Christ. Quote from Rev. IV: "After this I looked and behold, a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, "Come up hither and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." And immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices, and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne,

which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal, and in the midst of the throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion and the second beast like a calf and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within, and they rest not day and night, saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty which was and is and is to come. And when those beasts gave glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and Power, for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

This is the future stage of evolution when those who have overcome will have become Fathers in the true sense.

I said that what once took place, in the deep secrecy of the Mysteries will, in later times, be unsealed. I have told you that Christ's appearance on earth was presented in the Greek Mysteries. What was then a secret was unveiled through the appearance of Christ. We could have gone into the Greek Mysteries and we should there have beheld the Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. The seven seals belong to the future. If a mystery is also proclaimed then, it will again be a mystery of which the seal belongs to a still later future.

As far as this is possible, I will tell you of a mystery that has been celebrated ever since the time of the ancient Indian Rishis and is of deepest significance. I will try to render it in the following way, in symbolism. There is a horse, with the front foot raised. Upon this horse sits a divine figure with a bow. The figure gives a sign and the horse tramples a serpent on the head with its foot. This is the horse Kalki. This signifies that everything of a lower nature falls away, that there will come a future when the Son of the Gods, he who sits upon the horse, will come and who, as king adorned with the crown, will bring the revelation of what is hidden in the book with the seven seals. This is a mystery that is everywhere to be found. I have only been able to indicate it in an entirely external way. But today it is still a mystery that can be experienced and beheld only by an Apocalypticist, but in the future times will be unveiled within us, just as John has revealed and written down for

us the unsealing of the old world. Then we shall realise that it points to the time when the Elders, the Fathers, receive the revelation of what underlies this mystery and is revealed at its unsealing.

Quote from Rev. VI:1-3 "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, come and see. And I saw, and beheld a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, come and see."

This is repeated four times. The unsealing of the mystery of the Fathers, as it is contained in Christianity, is of all words spoken in the Mysteries, the most significant. Whence comes man? Whither does his development lead? From the Father to the Father. This is revealed through the Mediator. "No one cometh to the Father save through me."

The whole of world evolution, that of the past and that of the future, actually comes to expression in the Apocalypse. Even these indications are of the most elementary kind. We must first be able to employ the words of the Apocalypse in their true meaning. We shall learn more and more from them.

Today I only wanted to call forth a feeling that by steeping oneself in this work, one realises that its depths are inexhaustible. Of this I can assure you: The Apocalypse is one of those writings in the face of which we learn true humility, true piety and through which we learn what the Indian esotericist calls Faith (Glauben). There is an experience which imparts this Faith to us in the deepest sense, and it is the following: After we have made efforts to understand such a writing, we believe, to begin with, that we know a little about it. But when we try to go into it still more deeply, as deeply as our powers allow, we find that our earlier interpretation was utterly childish. We realise that only now do we rightly understand what is said. And having done this and after a lapse of time again take up the book, the same experience is repeated. When this has happened several times, Shradda (Faith) comes to us. We steep ourselves again and again in such a writing, finding in it ever greater depths. That is the inexhaustible fount of such writings, which we can read with unshakable confidence but can never come to an end of their meaning. This is at the same time an urge to be humble in our attitude towards such writings, to delve into them more and more.

deeply. It will be clear to us then that if a really profound explanation seems to have been found, it will become ever more profound, in time to come. From this springs the consciousness that the greatest treasures given to man do not stem from human imperfection but from divine perfection, for this is verily divine wisdom, revelation of divine wisdom. Documents of wisdom are given to us in these books. Our understanding of them is still feeble, for these writings come to us, not from men, not from below, but from above, through the Gods. We have to develop to their heights. This gives the esotericist a feeling of the truth of words which must become part of his very life, must be his guiding maxim, and which must permeate theosophists ever more deeply. For it is not dogmatic knowledge, not doctrinal knowledge, that makes a man a theosophist, but the fact that he is steeped through and through with the wisdom of this utterance, that his whole attitude of mind and feeling is filled with the wisdom which it contains: The Highest – it is given from the Primal Beginning; The Highest – it will be understood through man at the end of the days.