

Rudolf Steiner

The Mission of the Archangel Michael

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PART 3: ONE

Michael's Mission: The Spiritualization of the Knowledge of Space

(From: Rudolf Steiner, *Man and the World of Stars*, pp. 82-93)

Dornach, December 17, 1922

... Only since the first third of the fifteenth century have human concepts and ideas become purely human. And since this period began, humanity has concerned itself chiefly with what is *spatial*.

But if one goes still further back – to the cultures we have called Old Indian, Old Persian, Egypto-Chaldean – one finds everywhere conceptions of the world referring to *World Ages*. These point back to an ancient time, the "Golden Age," when human beings still interacted with the Gods. And they point back, too, to another epoch, when human beings still experienced the earthly sunreflection of the Divine, which we call the Silver Age, and so on. Time and the course of Time play a conspicuous role in the world pictures of these early evolutionary phases. Likewise, if we consider the Greek epoch, and the picture of the world that was simultaneously current in more Northern and Middle European regions, we find everywhere that the idea of Time plays an essential role. The Greeks pointed back to a primeval Age when cosmic happenings were the outcome of relations between Uranus and Gaia. After this, they pointed to the next Age of Chronos and Rhea, and then to the Age of Zeus and the other Gods known to Greek Mythology who ruled the cosmos and the earth. Germanic Mythology is the same. Time plays the essential role in all these world pictures.

Space plays a much less important part. The spatial element is still obscure in the Norse and Germanic world pictures – those containing images like the Yggdrasil, the World Ash, and the Giant Ymir, and so forth. It is quite clear in these that something is taking place in Time, but the idea of Space is still only dimly dawning – it is a factor of no great importance. It is not until the age of Galileo, Copernicus, and Giordano Bruno, in fact, that Space actually begins to play its great role in our picture of the universe. Even in the Ptolemaic system, which is admittedly concerned with Space, Time is still a much more essential element than it is in the picture familiar to us since the fifteenth century, where Time plays only a secondary role. For instance, today the present distribution of stars in cosmic space is taken as the starting-point for research and then through calculation conclusions are reached as to what the world picture was like in earlier times. Today the concept of Space, the spatial picture of the world, has become the most important. All human judgments are based on the principle of Space. Modern humanity has elaborated this spatial element in its picture of the external world, as well as in all its thinking. Indeed, today such spatial thinking has reached its zenith.

Think how difficult it is for people today to follow an exposition in terms of Time. They are happy as soon as Space is brought in – at least to the extent of drawing something on the blackboard. And if the feeling of Space is conveyed by means of photographs, then they are truly in their element! "Illustration" – and by this I mean something expressed in terms of Space – is what our contemporaries strive to achieve in every exposition. Time, inasmuch as it is in perpetual flow, has become something that causes us discomfort. We still attach value to it in music; but even there the tendency towards the spatial is quite evident....

This orientation of the soul to the spatial is certainly very characteristic of our present time. Whoever observes modern culture and civilization with open eyes will find it everywhere.

On the other hand, in anthroposophical Spiritual Science, we strive, as you know, to get away from what is spatial. To be sure, we meet the desire for what is spatial in that we, too, try to give tangible form to the spiritual – but we do this to strengthen the faculty of ideation.

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But we until always be conscious that this is only a means of illustration and that what is essential is to strive, at least to strive, to transcend the spatial....

Inwardly considered, what is it we are seeking to achieve? If we transfer ourselves in thought into the position of the divine-spiritual Beings in whose ranks we live between death and rebirth, discerning how they direct their gaze downward, and observe (through the various means I have described) the course of events on earth, then we find that these divine-spiritual Beings looked down to the earth in the earlier ages of human evolution – in the Old Indian, Old Persian, Old Egypto-Chaldean epochs – and beheld what human beings were doing, their view of nature and of their social life. At that time – if I may put it so – these divine spiritual Beings could still say to themselves about human deeds and thoughts: "The deeds and thoughts of human beings come from their memory of – or they are an echo of – what they experienced with us in our world." Certainly, in the case of the Chaldeans or Egyptians it was still quite evident that the primary wish of human beings on the earth was to carry out, what the Gods above had thought or were thinking. When the gods looked down to the Earth, they saw events occurring that were in keeping with their intentions; and it was the same when they looked into human thoughts – as Gods are able to do. Since the first third of the fifteenth century, however, all this has changed. Since then, when divine-spiritual Beings look down to the earth, especially when they look down at the present time, they find things everywhere fundamentally alien to them: they find that human beings are doing things on earth which they themselves planned solely in accordance with the phenomena and processes of earthly existence. To the Gods with whom we live between death and rebirth, this is an entirely alien attitude.

When an alchemist in his laboratory sought to ascertain the divine-spiritual will by combining and separating the Elements, a God would have beheld something akin to his own nature in what the alchemist was doing. If a God were to look into a modern laboratory, the methods and procedures adopted there would be intensely alien. It may be said with absolute truthfulness that since the first third of the fifteenth century, the Gods have felt as if the whole human race has in a certain respect fallen away from them, as if human beings below on the earth were engaged in self-made trivialities, in things which the Gods cannot understand – certainly not the Gods who still guided human hands and minds in the pursuit of science in Greco-Latin times. These divine-spiritual Beings can take no active interest, in what is done in modern laboratories, let alone modern hospitals.

I was obliged on a previous occasion to say that when the Gods look down through windows, as I called them, what interests them least of all on earth is the kind of work carried out by professors. It goes to the very heart of those who have genuine insight into modern Initiation Science that they must say to themselves: "In recent times human beings have become estranged from the Gods. We must therefore seek for bridges to reconnect us with the divine-spiritual world." This is what quickens the impulse for our anthroposophical Spiritual Science. Its desire is to transform scientific ideas and concepts that are unintelligible to the gods in such a way that they are spiritualized and are thus able to provide a bridge to the Divine-Spiritual....

A cosmic truth of great significance underlies these things. The conception of Space is an entirely human conception. The Gods with whom human beings live together in the most important period of their lives – the period between death and a new birth – have a vivid conception of Time, but no conception of Space such as human beings acquire on earth. This earthly conception of Space is entirely human. A human being really enters into Space for the first time when he or she descends from the divine-spiritual world into the physical, earthly world. True, as seen from here, everything appears in spatial perspective. But dimensional thinking, if I may put it so, is something that is entirely earthly.

This conception of Space has become ingrained in Western civilization since the fifteenth century. But once bridges to the divine world have been found again by spiritualizing purely spatial knowledge, then all that humanity gained from the science of Space during the period when human beings emancipated their thought most drastically from the divine world – i.e., since the fifteenth century – all this will become important for the divine-spiritual world. If

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human beings will but bring the spirit into the conception of Space once more, humanity can conquer a new portion of the universe for the Gods.

You see, what I described in *Occult Science* – the periods of Old Saturn, Old Sun, Old Moon, Earth and the future periods of Jupiter, Venus, Vulcan – is only present to the Gods in *Time*. Here on earth, however, it lives itself out in terms of space. Today we are living in the "Earth" period of evolution, but in events on the earth there still linger echoes of the periods of Old Moon, Old Sun and Old Saturn.

If you steep yourselves in the description of the Old Saturn period given in *Occult Science*, you will say: The Saturn period is past, but the effect of its warmth is still present in our earthly existence. Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth are within one another; they exist simultaneously. The Gods see them in *Time*. Although in earlier ages, even during Chaldean times, they were seen in their temporal succession, now we see them within one another, spatially within one another. Indeed this leads very much further and if we study these things in detail, we shall discover what really lies behind them.

Imagine that you stretch out your left hand. The Divine lives in everything terrestrial. The Divine lives in your muscles, in your nerves. Now, touch the fingers of your right hand with the fingers of your left hand. This is something which the divine-spiritual Beings cannot follow. They follow the left and right hands up to the point of contact, but the feeling, the touch, that arises between the two is an experience which the faculties possessed by the Gods do not make possible: it is something that arises only in *Space*. Just as little as the Gods behold Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth simultaneously, but only in succession, in *Time*, so they have none of the purely spatial experiences known to human beings. When you look with your left and right eyes and have the lines of vision from right and from left, the activity of the Gods is present in the vision from the right eye and again in the vision from the left eye, but a purely human element lies in the meeting of the two lines of vision. Because we have been placed into the world of *Space*, this is the way we experience as human beings. It is something that we experience in a state of emancipation from the activity of the Gods.

You need only extend this imagery of the right and left hands to other domains of earthly life, and you will find a great many human experiences that fall right away from the field of vision of the Gods. It is really only since the first third of the fifteenth century that humanity has brought ideas of a purely human kind into these domains. Hence human thinking has become less and less intelligible to the Gods when they look down to the earth. And with this in mind we must turn our attention to that most important event in the last third of the nineteenth century, which may be characterized by saying that the rulership of the Spiritual Being known as Gabriel was succeeded by the rulership of the Spiritual Being known as Michael.

In the last third of the nineteenth century, the Spiritual Being we call Michael became the Ruler, as it were, of everything of a spiritual character in human events on the earth. Whereas Gabriel is a Being oriented more to the passive qualities of human beings, Michael is the active Being, the Being who, as it were, pulses through our breath, our veins, our nerves, to the end that we may actively develop all that belongs to our full humanity in connection with the Cosmos. What stands before us as a challenge from Michael is that we become active in our very thoughts, working out our view of the world through our own inner activity. We belong truly to the Michael Age only when we do not sit down inactively and seek to let enlightenment come to us from within and from without. We must co-operate *actively* in what the world offers us by way of experiences and opportunities for observation. If a person carries out an experiment, this does not fundamentally involve activity; he or she is not necessarily *active*. The experiment is just an event like any other event in Nature, except that it is directed by human intelligence. But all happenings in Nature have also been directed by intelligence! How is human mental life nowadays affected by experiments? There is no active participation, for the experimenters simply look on and try to eliminate activity as much as possible. They want to let the experiment tell them everything and regard as fanciful anything that is the outcome of their own inner activity. It is precisely in its scientific ideas that humanity is least of all in the Michael Age.

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But humanity *must* enter the Michael Age. If we ask ourselves, "What does it actually mean, in the whole cosmic context, that Gabriel passed the scepter on to Michael?" we must answer: It means that of all the Beings who spiritually guide humanity, Michael is the Spirit who is the first to draw near to what human beings on earth are doing as the result of the emancipation of knowledge that began with the first third of the fifteenth century. Gabriel stands in utter perplexity before the ideas and notions of a cultured person of the modern age. But Michael, who is closely connected with the forces of the Sun, can at least allow his activity to penetrate the human thought that call impel the free deeds of human beings. Michael can work, for instance, into what I have called in *Occult Science*, free, pure thinking which must be the true impulse for the individual human will acting in Freedom in the new age. Michael has his own particular relationship to human deeds that spring from the impulse of love.

Michael, therefore, is the messenger whom the Gods sent down to receive what is now being spiritualized out of the knowledge that has been emancipated from the spirit. The science which, in the form of anthroposophical Spiritual Science, re-spiritualizes spatial thinking, lifting it again into the supersensible, works from below upward, stretching out its hands, as it were from below upward, to grasp the hands of Michael stretching down from above. Once these hands meet, the bridge can be created between human beings and the Gods. Michael became the Regent of the Age because he is to receive what the Gods wish to receive from what humanity can add to the understanding of Time by the understanding of Space – for this augments the knowledge the Gods already possess.

The Gods picture Saturn, Sun, Moon, and Earth phases of evolution in temporal succession. When human beings develop the latest phase of human thought life in the right way, they view this evolution spatially. The Gods call picture the outstretching of the left and of the right hand, but the actual contact between the hands is a purely human affair. The Gods can live in the line of vision of the left eye and in the line of vision of the right eye, but human beings alone see how the vision of the left eye meets the vision of the right eye *spatially*. Michael directs his gaze upon the earth. And by entering into connection with what human beings develop in pure thought and objectify in pure will, he is able to take cognizance of what is acquired by the citizens of earth, by human beings, as the fruit of spatial thinking. He is able to carry it into the divine worlds.

If human beings were merely to develop spatial knowledge and not spiritualize it, if they were to stop short at Anthropology and were unwilling to advance to Anthroposophy (see Rudolf Steiner, *The Case for Anthroposophy (Riddles of the Soul)* Chapter One.), then the Michael Age would pass them by. Michael would retire from his rulership and would bring the Gods the message: "Humanity wants to separate itself from the Gods." If Michael is to bring the right message to the world of the Gods, he must be able to say: "During my Age, human beings raised into the Supersensible what they had developed as purely spatial thinking. Therefore we can accept humanity once more. Human beings have re-united their thought with ours." If human evolution proceeds in the right way, Michael will not have to say to the Gods: "Human beings have become used to staring at everything spatially. They have come to despise what lives only in time." But if human beings are resolved to achieve their earthly goal, Michael will have to say: "Human beings have taken pains to reintroduce Time and the Supersensible into the Spatial." Therefore those may be regarded as having linked their lives directly to the life of the Gods who are not content merely staring at the Spatial and cannot accept things in so material a form as was customary at the beginning of the twentieth century. ...

TWO

Michael, the Dragon and the Human Soul or Gemüt

(From: Rudolf Steiner, *Michaelmas & the Soul-Forces of Man*, pp.1-17)

Vienna, September 27, 1923

When Anthroposophy is discussed in certain circles today, one of the many misstatements made about it is that it is intellectual, that it appeals predominantly to the scientific mind, that it does not sufficiently consider the needs of the human *Gemüt*. ... [The German Word, *Gemüt*, is almost untranslatable. Rudolf Steiner says of it "this *Gemüt* lives in the center of soul life." The dictionary defines *Gemüt* as "heart, soul or mind." But these must be thought of as one, not as separate. Hence the original translator proposes: "The mind warmed by a loving heart and stimulated by the soul's imaginative power."]

Today, in what I might call a sort of historical retrospect, we shall discuss first how, in earlier periods of human evolution, this *Gemüt* was granted a voice in the search for knowledge. It was permitted to conjure up grandiose and mighty images before the human soul, intended to illuminate the efforts of human beings to realize their incorporation into the body of world events and the cosmos, as well as their participation in the changing times. In those days when the human *Gemüt* was still allowed to contribute its share to the creation of world views, these images it conjured up really constituted their most important element. They represented vast and comprehensive cosmic relationships and assigned humanity its place in them.

To create a basis for further study of the human *Gemüt* from the perspective of Anthroposophy, I should like to present you today with one of those grandiose, majestic images that used to function in the way I have indicated. At the same time, this image is one of those that is especially appropriate to bring before our souls in a new manner. With this appropriateness, we shall also deal. I should like to talk to you, then, about an image with which you are all familiar, but whose significance for human consciousness has gradually or partly faded and partly suffered from misconception. I refer to the image of Michael's conflict or battle with the Dragon. Many people are still deeply affected by this image, but its more profound content is either only faintly understood or misunderstood. At best, the image makes no close contact with the human *Gemüt*, as it did once, even as late as the eighteenth century. People today have no understanding of the changes that have taken place in this respect, of how great a proportion of what so-called intelligent people today call fantastic visions constituted the most serious element of ancient world views. This is the case, above all, with the image of Michael's combat with the Dragon.

Nowadays, most people when they reflect on human evolution on the earth are inclined by a materialistic world view to trace the relatively more perfect human form further and further back to less perfect forms, to physical-animal forebears. In this way, they actually move away from contemporary human beings who can experience their own natures in an inner, psycho-spiritual way to arrive at far more material creatures from whom human beings are supposed to have descended – creatures standing much closer to material existence. In other words, people assume that matter has gradually evolved upward to the point where it experiences spirit. But that was not the view even in comparatively recent times. In fact, it was really the exact opposite.

Even as late as the eighteenth century, when those who had not been infected by the materialistic mentality and perspective cast their inner gaze back to prehistoric humankind, they saw their ancestors not as beings who were less human than themselves but as beings who were more spiritual. In fact, most people at that time were not yet materialistic. **Looking back, they saw beings in whom spirituality was so inherent that they did not take on**

physical bodies as people on earth do today. Indeed, for them the earth as we know it did not even exist then. That is, looking back to their forebears, people in the eighteenth century still beheld beings who lived in a higher, more spiritual way than human beings of their time. These beings had bodies of much finer, more spiritual substance than we know today. They did not assign beings who were like present day humans to such a sphere, but more exalted beings – beings having at most an etheric body, but not a physical one. Such, approximately, were our ancestors as people in the eighteenth century still conceived them.

People used to look back to a time when there were no so-called higher animals either, when at most there existed only animals whose descendants of the jelly-fish kind live in the oceans today. On what was the ancestor of our earth, therefore, they imagined, so to speak, an animal kingdom on the plane below that of human beings; and, above this, a kingdom embracing only beings with at most an etheric body. In other words, what I enumerated in Occult Science, an Outline, as Beings of the higher Hierarchies would still be today, though in a different form, what was then considered in a certain sense the ancestry of humanity.

These beings – *Angeloi, Archangeloi, and Archai* – were not destined in their then stage of evolution to be free beings in the sense in which we speak of freedom in relation to human beings. These Beings did not experience the will in a way that could give them the unique feeling we humans express when we speak of "desiring something arbitrarily." These Beings desired nothing arbitrarily. They willed what flowed into their being as divine will, for they had completely identified their will with the divine will. The divine Beings ranking above them and signifying, in their interrelationships, the divine guidance of the world – these beings willed, in a sense, through the lower Spirits, the Archangels and Angels; so that the latter willed absolutely according to the purpose and in the sense of superior, divine-spiritual will.

The world of ideas of this older humanity was as follows. It was believed that in that ancient epoch the time had not yet come when beings could develop who would be conscious of the feeling of freedom. The divine-spiritual world-order had postponed to a later epoch the moment when a number of the Spirits, identified with the divine will, were to receive a free will of their own. This would occur when the right moment in world evolution was reached....

But then – as this ancient humanity saw it a certain number of beings arose among these Spirits, who wanted to dissociate their will, as it were, emancipate it, from the divine will, although their true destiny was to remain identified with the will of the divine spirit. In superhuman pride, certain Beings revolted because they desired freedom of will before the time had come for their freedom to mature; and the most important of these beings, their leader, was conceived of as the Being who took shape in the *Dragon that Michael combats* – Michael, who remained above, in the realm of those spirits that wanted to continue molding their will to the divine-spiritual will above them.

By thus remaining steadfast within the divine-spiritual will, Michael received the impulse to deal adequately with the Spirit that grasped at freedom prematurely, if I may put it that way; for the forms possessed by Beings of the Hierarchy of the *Angeloi, Archangeloi, and Archai* were simply not adapted to beings destined to have a free will, that is, emancipated from divine will, as I have described. Such forms, namely, the human form were not to come into being until later in world evolution. All this is conceived as happening in a period when cosmic development of the human form was not yet possible; nor were higher animal forms possible – only the low ones I mentioned.

Thus a form had to come into being that might be called cosmically contradictory, and the refractory Spirit had to be poured into this mold, so to speak. It could neither be an animal form of the kind destined to appear only later, nor an animal form of that time, made of the then prevalent softer matter, so to speak. It could only be an animal form that differed from any that was possible in the physical world. At the same time, in order to represent a cosmic contradiction, it had to resemble an animal. And the only form that could be evolved out of what was possible at that time was the form of a Dragon. Naturally, when painted or otherwise represented, this Dragon has been interpreted in various ways throughout history – more or less suitably interpreted, according to what artists were able to cognize with inner imagination of a being that had developed a refractory will. In any case, this form is not to be

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found among those that became possible in the physical world in the animal range up to the human: it had to remain a supersensible being. As such, it could not exist in the realm inhabited by the Beings of the higher Hierarchies – *Angels, Archangels*, and so forth. It had to be transferred, as it were, and placed among the beings that could evolve in the course of physical development. This is the story of "The Fall of the Dragon from Heaven to Earth." It was Michael's deed to bestow this form that is *supra-animalistic* – i.e., supersensible, but intolerable in the supersensible realm. For although the Dragon is supersensible, it is incompatible with the realm of the supersensible where it existed before it rebelled.

Thus this Dragon form was transferred to the physical world, but as a superphysical, supersensible form. It lived thereafter in the realm where the minerals, plants, and animals live: in what became the earth. But it did not live there in a way that a human eye could perceive it as it does an ordinary animal. When the soul's eye is raised to those worlds for which provision was made, so to speak, in the plan of higher worlds, it beholds in its imaginations the Beings of the higher Hierarchies. And when the human physical eye observes the physical world it sees simply what has come into being in the various kingdoms of nature, up to the form of the physical-sensible human being. But when the soul's eye is directed to what physical nature embraces, it beholds this inherently contradictory form of the Adversary, of the one who is like an animal and yet not like an animal, the one who dwells in the visible world, yet is himself invisible: it beholds the form of the Dragon. And in the whole genesis of the Dragon human beings of old saw the act of Michael, who remained in the realm of spirit in the form appropriate to that realm.

The earth then came into being, and with it, humanity; and human beings were meant to become, in a sense, twofold beings. With one part of their being, with their psycho-spiritual part, they were to reach up into what is called the heavenly or supersensible world; and with the other, with their physical-etheric part, they were to belong to that nature which came into being as the nature of the earth, a new cosmic body – the cosmic body to which the apostate Spirit, the Adversary, was relegated. This is where human beings had to come into being. They were the beings who, according to the primordial decree that underlies all, belong in this world. Humanity belongs on the earth. The Dragon did not belong on the earth, but had been transferred thither.

And now consider what humans encountered on the earth as they came into existence with it. They encountered what had evolved as outer nature from the previous kingdoms of nature, which tended toward and culminated in our present mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, up to our own physical form. This is what humanity encountered – what we are accustomed to call extra-human nature. But what was this? It was, and still is today, the continuation of what was intended by the highest creative powers in the ongoing plan for the world's evolution. That is why as human beings, experiencing it in our *Gemüt or soul*, we can look out upon external nature – upon the minerals and all that is connected with the mineral world, upon the wondrous crystal formations, upon the mountains, the clouds, and all the other forms – and behold this outer nature in its condition of death, as it were, its condition of not being alive. But we see all this that is not alive as something that an earlier divine world discarded – just as the human corpse, though with a different significance, is discarded by the living person at death.

Although the visible aspect of the human corpse is not something that can impress us positively at first sight, yet in a certain sense it is a divine corpse, a corpse on a higher plane, that arose in the mineral kingdom and may be regarded as reflecting, in its form and shape, the originally formless-living Divinity. Indeed, what then comes into being as the higher kingdoms of nature can be regarded as further reflections of what originally existed as the formless Divine. In other words, someone can gaze upon the whole of nature and feel that this extra-human nature is a mirror of the Divine in this world.

And that, after all, is what nature is supposed to give to our human *Gemüt*: a mirror of the Divine. Naively, and not by means of speculation, we must be able to feel joy and harmony at the sight of this or that manifestation of nature. We must be able to feel inner jubilation and enthusiasm when we experience creative nature in its sprouting and blossoming. And

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our very unawareness of the cause of this elation, this enthusiasm, this overflowing joy in nature, should evoke deep down in our hearts the feeling that our *Gemüt* is so intimately related to nature that we can recognize, dimly, "All this nature the Gods have taken out of themselves and established in the world as their mirror – the same Gods from whom my *Gemüt* derives, from whom I myself spring but in a different way." All our inner elation and joy in nature, all that rises within us as a feeling of release when we participate vividly in the freshness of nature, all this should be attuned to the feeling of relationship between our human *Gemüt* and what lives out there in nature as a mirror of the Divinity....

Such was the feeling still cherished by many enlightened people even in the eighteenth century. They still felt vividly the difference between outer nature and what nature becomes after humans have devoured, breathed, and perceived it. They felt the difference between naive outer nature, as it is perceptible to the senses, and human, inwardly surging sensuality. This difference was still lovingly clear to many in the eighteenth century who experienced nature and humanity and described them to their pupils, described how nature and humanity are involved in the conflict between Michael and the Dragon.

Considering that this radical polaric contrast of outer nature in its essential innocence and inner, human nature in its corruption or guilt still occupied human souls in the eighteenth century, we must not forget the Dragon that Michael relegated to the world of nature because he found it unworthy to remain in the world of spirituality. Out in the world of minerals, plants, even of animals, the Dragon, whose form is incompatible with nature, assumed none of the forms of nature beings. It assumed the dragon form which today must seem fantastic to many of us, a form that must inevitably remain supersensible. It cannot enter a mineral, a plant, or an animal, nor can it enter a physical human body. **But it can enter that which outer, innocent nature becomes, in the form of guilt in the upwelling life of instincts in the physical human body.** Thus, as late as the eighteenth century, many people still said, "And the Dragon, the Old Serpent, was cast down out of heaven to earth, where it had no home; but then it built its bulwark in human nature, and now it is entrenched there."

In this way the mighty image of Michael and the Dragon was still an integral part of human cognition in those times. An anthroposophy appropriate to that period would have explained that by taking outer nature into oneself through nourishment, breathing, and perception, one creates within oneself a sphere of action for the Dragon. **The Dragon lives in human nature.** This idea lived clearly in the souls of people in the eighteenth century. Indeed, one can easily imagine that if they asked some clairvoyant being on another planet to draw a picture of the earth, this clairvoyant would have shown everything existing in the mineral, plant, and animal realms – in a word, in the extra-human realm – as bearing no trace of the Dragon, and to represent the earth-being the clairvoyant would have drawn the Dragon coiling through the animality in human beings.

Thus the situation had changed relative to what it had been in pre-human times. For pre-humanity, the conflict between Michael and the Dragon was located in outer objectivity, so to speak. But now the Dragon was *outwardly* nowhere to be found. Where then was it? Where would one have to look for it? Anywhere there were human beings on earth – that's where the Dragon was. If Michael wanted to carry on his mission, which in pre-human times lay in objective nature, when his task was to conquer the Dragon, the world-monster, externally, then he had to continue the struggle within human nature. This change from outward to inward occurred in the remote past and persisted into the eighteenth century. Those who held this view knew that they had transferred to the inner human being an event that formerly had been a cosmic one. In effect, they said: "Looking back to olden times, you must imagine that Michael cast the Dragon out of heaven down to earth – an event occurring in extra-human worlds. But now look at more recent times. Human beings come to earth, they take outer nature into themselves and transform it, and so help the Dragon take possession of it. Thus the conflict between Michael and the Dragon must now be carried out upon the earth."

Such trends of thought were not as abstract as people today would like thoughts to be.

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Today people like to get along with thoughts that are as obvious as possible. They put it this way: "Well, formerly an event like the conflict between Michael and the Dragon was simply thought of as external, but in the course of evolution humanity has turned inward; hence such an event is now perceived only inwardly." Truly, those who are content to stop at such abstractions are not to be envied, and in any case they fail to envision the course of the world history of human thought. For it happened as I have just presented it: *the outer cosmic conflict of Michael and the Dragon was transferred to the inner human being, because only in human nature could the Dragon now find its sphere of action.*

This moving of the Dragon into the human being brought the germination of human freedom into Michael's task. For if the conflict had simply continued within human beings in the same way that it had formerly taken place outside them, then human beings would have become complete automatons. By being transferred into the human interior, the struggle becomes, in a sense, to express it in an outer abstraction, a battle between higher and lower human natures. Now, the only form higher nature could assume for human consciousness was that of Michael in the supersensible worlds, to whom human beings were led to lift their gaze. As a matter of fact, in the eighteenth century, numerous guides and instructions still existed, all providing ways by which people could reach the sphere of Michael and, with the help of Michael's power, fight the Dragon dwelling in their animal natures.

A person, able to see into the deeper spiritual life of the eighteenth century, would have to be pictured somewhat as follows. Outwardly, there is the human form, in whose lower, animalistic portion the Dragon is writhing, even coiling, about the heart. And then as it were *behind* the person – for higher things are seen with the back of the head – there is the outer cosmic figure of Michael, towering, radiant, both retaining his cosmic nature and reflecting it into higher human nature, so that the person's etheric body etherically reflects Michael's cosmic figure. And then, in the head – but working down into the heart – one can see Michael's power or force crushing the Dragon and causing its blood to flow from the heart down to the limbs.

Such was the picture of the inner human struggle between Michael and the Dragon that many people still harbored in the eighteenth century. It was also the picture that suggested to many people that, as they put it, it was their duty to conquer the "lower" with the help of the "higher." In other words, it was a picture that taught people that they needed the power of Michael for their own lives.

Scientific intellect, on the other hand, sees the Kant-Laplace theory of the origin of the universe; it sees the Kant-Laplace primal vapor – perhaps even a spiral vapor. And out of this, the planets evolve, leaving the sun in the middle. And then, on one of these planets, the kingdoms of nature gradually arise; humanity comes into being. And, looking into the future, intellect sees all this passing over again into the great graveyard of natural existence. The intellect cannot help imagining the matter in this way; and because intellect has increasingly become the sole recognized authority on human cognition, philosophy has gradually become what it is today for humankind in general. But in all the earlier peoples of whom I have spoken the eye of the soul, as I might call it, was active. We can be isolated from the world in our intellects, for everyone has his or her own head and in that head his or her own thoughts. But in our *Gemüt* or soul, we cannot become isolated in this way, for the soul is not dependent on the head, but upon our rhythmic organism. The air I have within me at the present moment, I did not have within me a moment ago: it was the general air; and in another moment when I exhale it will be the general air again. It is only the head that isolates human beings, making of them *hermits on the earth*. In fact even in relation to our souls' physical organization, we are not isolated in this way, but rather belong to the cosmos, indeed are merely figures in the cosmos.

But gradually the *Gemüt* – the soul – lost its power of vision, and the head alone became seeing. The head by itself, however, develops only intellectuality: it isolates people. When human beings still saw with their souls, they did not project abstract thoughts into the cosmos with the object of interpreting or explaining it: they still saw great images into it, like that of Michael's battle with the Dragon. Such people saw what lived in their own nature and

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being, something that had evolved out of the world, the cosmos, as I described it today. They saw the inner struggle of Michael come to life in the human being, in the *anthropos*. They saw this inner Michael struggle take the place of the outer cosmic Michael struggle. They saw anthroposophy develop out of *cosmosophy*. Whenever we turn from the abstract thoughts that affect us as cold and matter-of-fact, whose intellectuality makes us shiver and look back to an older world view, we find ourselves guided to *images*, one of the greatest of which is Michael's war with the Dragon – Michael, who first cast the Dragon to earth where (I may say) the Dragon could take up his human fortress; Michael, who then became the fighter of the Dragon in humanity, as I have described.

In the picture that I have evoked for you today, Michael stands cosmically behind us, while within us is an etheric image of Michael. This image carries out the real struggle by which human beings themselves, participating in Michael's battle, can gradually become free. For it is not Michael himself who wages the battle, but human devotion and the image of Michael that it calls forth. In the cosmic Michael there still lives that Being who engaged in the original cosmic struggle with the Dragon. We can look toward this Being. Truly, not upon earth alone do events take place – in fact earthly events remain incomprehensible to us unless we can see them as images of events in the supersensible world and to find their causes there. In this regard a deed was performed by Michael in the supersensible realm shortly before our time, a deed I should like to characterize in the following way. In doing so I must speak in a way that is discredited today as being anthropomorphic – and yet how could I relate what occurs in the supersensible world other than by using human words to describe it?

The epoch during which Michael cast the Dragon down to earth may be thought of as lying far back in pre-human times. But then, when humanity appears upon the earth, the war between Michael and the Dragon becomes ever more an inner struggle, until, at the end of the nineteenth century, Michael could say: "My image in humanity is now sufficiently condensed for human beings to be aware of it within themselves: they can now feel the Conqueror of the Dragon in their souls – or, at least, the image means something to them." The last third of the nineteenth century stands for some thing extraordinarily important in human evolution. In ancient times only a tenuous image of Michael existed in human beings; but this image condensed more and more, and in the last third of the nineteenth century the situation changed. In earlier times, the invisible, supersensible Dragon was predominantly active in the passions and instincts, desires and animal lusts. For ordinary consciousness, the Dragon remains subsensible. It lives in humanity's animal nature. It lives in all that tends to drag human beings down, in all that incites human beings to become more and more sub-human. This condition was such that Michael always intervened in human nature in order that humanity should not fall too low.

In the last third of the nineteenth century, however, Michael's image in human beings became so strong that now it depended as it were upon people's good will to consciously feel themselves upward and raise themselves to Michael's image – in order that, on the one hand, they might see the image of the Dragon in their unenlightened experience of the feelings while, on the other, the radiant figure of Michael may stand before their soul's eye: radiant in spiritual vision, yet within the reach of ordinary consciousness. Thus the content of the human soul can be this: "The power of the Dragon is working within me, trying to drag me down. I do not see it. I *feel* it as something that would drag me down below myself. But in the spirit I see the luminous Angel whose cosmic task has always been the vanquishing of the Dragon. I concentrate my soul upon this glowing figure, I let its light stream into my *Gemüt*, and thus my soul, illumined and warmed, will bear within it the strength of Michael. Hence, out of my own free resolution, I shall be able, through my alliance with Michael, to conquer the might of the Dragon in my lower nature."

If the good will necessary to raise such a conception to a religions force and so inscribe it in every human soul were widely available, then we would not have all the vague and impotent ideas such as prevail in every quarter today – plans for reforms, and the like. Rather, we would have something that could once more seize hold of the whole inner being, because something that can seize the inner being can be inscribed in the living *Gemüt*, which enters into a living relationship with the whole cosmos the moment it really comes to life.

Then those glowing thoughts of Michael would be the first harbingers of our ability to penetrate once more into the supersensible world. The striving for enlightenment would become inwardly and deeply religious. And thereby human beings would be prepared to celebrate the festivals of the year, whose understanding only glimmers faintly across the ages – but at least it glimmers. They would be prepared to celebrate in full consciousness the festival the calendar sets at the end of September, at the beginning of autumn, the Michael Festival, Michaelmas. For Michaelmas will regain its significance only when we are able to experience in our souls such a living vision. When we can feel this vision in a living way and can make it into an instinctive contemporary social impulse, then this Michael Festival – because the impulses spring directly from the spiritual world – could well be regarded as the crowning impulse of our time – indeed, even the initial impulse we need to find our way out of the present disaster. For it would add something real to all the talk about ideals, something not originating in human heads or hearts but in the cosmos.

And then, when trees shed their leaves and blossoms ripen into fruit, and nature sends us her first frost and prepares to sink into her winter death, we would be able to feel the burgeoning of spirit with which we should unite ourselves at Michaelmas, just as we feel the Easter Festival in sprouting, budding spring. Then, as citizens of the cosmos, we would be able to carry impulses into our lives which, because they are not abstract, would not remain ineffective but would reveal their power immediately. Indeed, until we can develop such cosmic impulses in our *Gemüt or soul*, life will not have a soul content again.

THREE

The Michael Imagination

(From: Rudolf Steiner, *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*, pp. 9-23)

Dornach, October 5, 1923

Today, I would like begin by reminding you how events that take place behind the veil of appearances, outside the physical, sense-perceptible world, can be described in pictorial terms. One has to speak in this way of these events, but the pictures correspond throughout with reality.

With regard to sense-perceptible events, we live in a time of hard tests for humanity, and these tests will become harder still. Many old forms of civilization, to which people still mistakenly cling, will sink into the abyss, and there will be an insistent demand that humanity must find its way to something new. In speaking of the course that the external human life will take in the near future, we cannot – as I have often said – arouse any kind of optimistic hopes. But a valid judgment as to the significance of external events cannot be formed unless we consider also the determining, directing cosmic events that occur behind the veil of the senses.

If we look attentively at our surroundings with our physical eyes and other senses, we perceive the physical environment of the earth, and the various kingdoms of nature within it. This is the milieu in which all that manifests as wind and weather in the course of the year comes to pass. When we direct our senses toward the external world, we have all this before us. These are the external facts. But behind the atmosphere, the sun-illuminated atmosphere, lies another world, perceptible by spiritual organs, as we may call them. Compared with the sense-world, this other world is a higher world, a world wherein a kind of light, a kind of spiritual or astral light, in which spiritual existence and spiritual deeds shine out and run their course. And these are truly no less significant for the whole development of the world and humanity than historical events taking place in the external environment of the

earth and on its surface.

Anyone today who is able to penetrate into these astral realms, wandering through them as one may wander among woods and mountains and find signposts at crossroads, may find "signposts" there in the astral light, inscribed in spiritual script. But these signposts have a quite special characteristic: they are not comprehensible without further explanation, even for someone who can "read" in the astral light. In the spiritual world and in its communications, things are not made as convenient as possible: anything one encounters there presents itself as a riddle to be solved. Only through inner investigation, through experiencing inwardly the riddle and much else, can one discover what the inscription on a spiritual signpost signifies.

Thus at this time – indeed for some decades now, but particularly at this time of hard trials for humankind – one can read in the astral light, as one goes about spiritually in these realms, a remarkable saying. It sounds like a prosaic comparison, but in this case, because of its inner significance, the prosaic does not remain prosaic. Just as we find notices to help us find our way – and we find signposts even in poetical landscapes – so we encounter an important spiritual signpost in the astral light. Time and time again, exactly repeated, we find there today the following saying, inscribed in highly significant spiritual script:

O Humanity,
You mold it to your service,
You reveal it according to the value of its substance
In many of your works.
Yet it will bring you healing
Only when it reveals to you
The lofty power of its spirit.

Injunctions of this kind that point to facts significant for humanity are inscribed, as I have said, in the astral light. They present themselves first as a kind of riddle to be solved, so that human beings may bring their soul-forces into activity. Today we will contribute something to the solving of this verse – which is actually a simple saying, but an important one for humankind today.

Let us recall how in many of our studies here the course of the year has been brought before our souls. [See, for instance, *The Cycle of the Year as Breathing-Process of the Earth*; also, more generally, *The Festivals and their Meaning*.] In the beginning we observe it quite externally: when spring comes we see nature sprouting and budding; we see how plants grow and come to flower, how life everywhere springs up out of the soil. All this is enhanced as summer draws on; and in summer it rises to its highest level. Then, when autumn comes, it withers and fades away; and when winter comes it dies into the lap of the earth.

This cycle of the year – which in earlier times, when a more instinctive consciousness prevailed, was celebrated with festivals – has another side, which we have also mentioned here. [For example, *Michaelmas and the Soul-Forces of Man*; also *Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centers*.] During winter the earth is united with the elemental spirits. They withdraw into the earth's interior and live there among the plant roots that are preparing for new growth, and among the other nature-beings who spend the winter there. Then, when spring comes, the earth breathes out its elemental being, as it were. The elemental spirits rise up as though from a tomb and ascend into the atmosphere. During winter they accepted the inner order of the earth, but now, as spring advances and especially as summer approaches, they receive more and more into their being and activity the order imposed upon them by the stars and the movements of the stars. Then, when high summer comes, there is a renewed surging of life in the earth's periphery among these elemental beings who had spent the winter in quiet and silence under the earth's mantle of snow. In the swirling and whirling of their dance they are governed by the reciprocal laws of planetary movement, by the pattern of the fixed stars, and so on. Then when autumn comes, the elemental beings turn towards the earth. As they approach it, they become subject more and more to its laws, so that in winter they can be breathed in again by the earth, once more to rest there in quietude.

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Those who can experience the cycle of the year in this way feel that their whole human life is wonderfully enriched. Today – and it has been so for some time past – we normally experience, and then but dimly and half-consciously, only the physical-etheric processes of the body occurring within the skin. We experience our breathing, the circulation of the blood. Everything that takes its course outside, in wind and weather, during the year; all that lives in the sprouting of the seed-forces, the fruiting of the earth-forces – all this is no less significant and decisive for the whole of human life, even though we are not conscious of it, than the breathing and blood-circulation which go on inside our skin.

When the sun rises over any region of the earth, we share in the effects of its warmth and light. And when we accept Anthroposophy in the right sense, reading it not like a sensational novel but so that what it imparts becomes the content of our mind, then we gradually educate heart and soul to experience all that goes on outside in the course of a year. Just as in the course of a day we experience early freshness, and readiness for work in the morning, and then the onset of hunger and of evening weariness, and just as we can trace the inner life and activity of the forces and substances within our skin, so, by taking to heart anthroposophical ideas – entirely different from the usual descriptions of sense-perceptible events – we can prepare our souls to become receptive to the activities that go on outside in the course of the year. We can continually deepen this sympathetic participation in the cycle of the year, and we can enrich it so that we do not live sourly – as one might say – within our skin, letting the outer world pass us by. On the contrary, we can enrich our experience so that we feel ourselves living in the blossoming of every flower, in the breaking open of the buds, in that wonderful secret of the morning, the glistening of dew-drops in the rays of the sun. In these ways, we can get beyond the dull, conventional way of reacting to the outer world that merely puts on an overcoat in winter and lighter clothes in summer and takes an umbrella when it rains. Only by going out of ourselves so that we experience the interweaving activity, the flow and ebb, of nature, do we really understand the cycle of the year.

If we do that, then, when spring pasties over the earth and summer is drawing near, we will be in the midst of it with our hearth and soul; we will discern how the sprouting, budding life of nature unfolds, how the elemental spirits fly and whirl in a pattern laid down for them by planetary movements. Then, in high summer, we will go out of ourselves and share in the life of the cosmos. Certainly this will dampen down our own inner lives, but at the same time our experience of summer will lead us out – in a cosmic waking sleep, we might say – to enter into the doing of the planets.

Today, generally speaking, people feel they can enter into the life of nature only in the season of growth – of germination, budding, flowering, and fruiting. Even if they cannot fully experience all this, they have more sympathy and perception for it than they have for the autumnal season of fading and dying away. In truth, however, we earn the right to enter into the spring season of growth only if we can also enter into the time when summer wanes and autumn draws on: the season of sinking down and dying that comes with winter. And if, during high summer, we rise inwardly, in cosmic waking sleep, with the elemental beings to the region where planetary activity in the outer world can be inwardly experienced, then we ought equally to sink ourselves down under the frost and snow-mantle of winter, so that we enter into the secrets of the womb of the earth during midwinter. And we ought, too, to participate in the fading and dying-off of nature when autumn begins.

If we are to participate in nature's waning, as we do in nature's growing, we can do so only if in a certain sense we can experience the dying away of nature in our inner being. For if we become more sensitive to the secret workings of nature, and thus participate actively in nature's germinating and fruiting, it follows that we will lovingly experience also the effects of autumn in the outer world. But it would bring us no comfort if we were to experience this only in the form it takes in nature, if we were to come only to a nature-consciousness of the secret of autumn and winter – as we readily do regarding the secrets of spring and summer. When the events of autumn and winter draw on, when Michaelmas comes, we certainly must enter sensitively into the processes of fading and dying; but we must not, as we do in summer, give ourselves over to a nature-consciousness. On the contrary, we must then

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devote ourselves to *self-consciousness*. When external nature is dying, we must oppose nature-consciousness with the force of self-consciousness.

Then the form of Michael stands before us again. If, under the impulse of Anthroposophy, we enter thus into the enjoyment of nature, the consciousness of nature, but also awake in ourselves an autumnal self-consciousness, then the image of Michael and the Dragon will stand majestically before us, revealing pictorially how nature-consciousness is overcome by self-consciousness when autumn draws near. This will happen if we can experience not only an inner spring and summer, but also a dying, death-bringing autumn and winter. This will make it possible for the picture of Michael and the Dragon to appear again as a forcible Imagination, summoning us to inner activity.

For those of us who out of present spiritual knowledge wrestle our way through to an experience of this picture, it expresses something very powerful. For when, following St. John's Tide, [See Rudolf Steiner; "The St. John Imagination" in *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*.] July, August and September draw on, we realize how we have been living through a waking-sleep of inner planetary experience together with the earth's elemental beings, and we become aware of what this really signifies.

It signifies an inner process of combustion, but we must not picture this as being like external combustion. All the processes which take a definite form in the outer world occur also within the human organism, but in a different guise. And so it is a fact that these inner processes reflect the year's changing course.

The inner process which occurs during high summer is a permeation of the organism by what is represented crudely in the material world as *sulphur*. When we live with the summer sun and its effects, we experience a sulphurizing process in our physical-etheric being. The sulphur that we carry within us as a useful substance has a special importance for us in high summer, an importance quite different from its importance at other seasons. It becomes a kind of combustion process. It is natural for humans that the sulphur within us should thus rise at midsummer to a specially enhanced condition. Material substances in different beings have secrets not dreamt of by materialistic science.

Everything that is physical-etheric in human beings is thus glowed through at midsummer with inward sulphur-fire, to use Jacob Boehme's expression. [Jacob Boehme, 1575-1624, German mystic and Hermetic cosmologist, was a central figure in the development of esoteric Philosophy, idealism, Romanticism and protestant theology (from the Quakers and Pietists to Paul Tillich). See Rudolf Steiner, *Mysticism at the Dawn of the Modern Age*.] It is a gentle, intimate process, not perceptible by ordinary consciousness, but – as is generally true of other such processes – it has a tremendous, decisive significance for events in the cosmos.

This sulphurizing process in human bodies at midsummer, although it is so mild and gentle and imperceptible to us, has a great importance to the evolution of the cosmos. A great deal happens out there in the cosmos when in summer human beings shine inwardly with the sulphur-process. It is not only the physically visible glow-worms [Johannis Käferchen; Literally, "John'sbugs"] which shine out around St. John's Day. Seen from other planets, the inner being of humans then begins to shine, becoming visible as a being of light to the etheric eyes of other planetary beings. That is the sulphurizing process. At the height of summer, human beings begin to shine out into cosmic space as brightly for other planetary beings as glow-worms shine with their own light in the meadows at St. John's Tide.

From the standpoint of the cosmos, this is a majestically beautiful sight, for human beings shine out into the cosmos in glorious astral light during high summer, but at the same time it gives occasion for the Ahrimanic power to draw near to humanity. For this Ahrimanic power is closely related to the sulphurizing process in the human organism. We can see, on the one hand, how human beings shine out into the cosmos in the St. John's light, and on the other how the Dragonlike serpent-form of Ahriman winds its way among the human beings shining in the astral light, trying to ensnare and embrace them, to draw them down into the realm of half-conscious sleep and dreams. There, caught in this web of illusion, human beings would become world-dreamers, and in this condition they would be a prey to the Ahrimanic powers. All this is significant for the cosmos also.

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And when in high summer, from a particular constellation, meteors fall in great showers of cosmic iron, then this cosmic iron, which carries an enormously powerful healing force, is the weapon which the Gods bring to bear against Ahriman, as he seeks Dragonlike to coil round the shining human forms. The force which falls on the earth in the meteoric iron is truly a cosmic force whereby the higher Gods endeavor to gain a victory over the Ahrimanic powers, when autumn approaches. And this majestic display in cosmic space, when the August meteor showers stream down into the human being shining in the astral light, has its counterpart – so gentle and apparently so small – in a change that occurs in the human blood. This human blood, which is in truth not such a material thing as coil temporary science imagines, but is permeated throughout by impulses from soul and spirit, is rayed through by the force which is carried as iron into the blood and wages war there on anxiety, fear, and hate. The processes which are set going in every blood corpuscle when the force of iron shoots into it are the same, on a minute human scale, as those which take place when meteors fall in a shining stream through the air. This permeation of human blood by the anxiety – dispelling force of iron is a meteoric activity. The effect of the raying in of the iron is to drive fear and anxiety out of the blood.

And so, while the Gods with their meteors wage war on the Spirit who would like to radiate fear over all the earth by his coiling serpentine form, and while they cause iron to stream radiantly into this fear-tainted atmosphere, which reaches its peak when autumn approaches or when summer wanes – so the same process occurs inwardly in humans, when their blood is permeated with iron. We can understand these things only if, on the one hand, we understand their inner spiritual significance and, on the other, if we recognize how the sulphur-process and the iron-process in human beings are connected with corresponding events in the cosmos.

Those who look out into space and see a shooting star should say to themselves with reverence for the Gods: "That occurrence in the great expanse of space has its minute counterpart continuously in myself. There are the shooting stars, while in every one of my blood corpuscles iron is taking form. My life is full of shooting stars, miniature shooting stars." And this inner fall of shooting stars, pointing to the life of the blood, is especially important when autumn approaches, when the sulphur-process is at its peak. For when people are shining like glow-worms in the way I have described, then the counter-force is present also, for millions of tiny meteors are scintillating inwardly in their blood.

This is the connection between the inner human being and the universe. And then we can see how, especially when autumn is approaching, there is a great raying-out of sulphur from the nervous system toward the brain. The whole person can then be seen as a sulphur-illuminated phantom, so to speak.

But raying into this bluish-yellow sulphur atmosphere come the meteor swarms from the blood. That is the other phantom. While the sulphur-phantom rises in clouds from our lower parts toward our head, the iron-forming process rays out from our heads, pouring itself like a stream of meteors into the life of the blood.

Such are human beings, when Michaelmas draws near. We must learn to make conscious use of the meteoric-force in our blood. We must learn to keep the Michael Festival by making it a festival for the conquest of anxiety and fear, a festival of inner strength and initiative – *a festival for the commemoration of selfless self-consciousness.*

Just as we celebrate the Redeemer's birth at Christmas and at Easter we celebrate His death and resurrection, and as at St. John's Tide we celebrate the outpouring of human souls into cosmic space, so at Michaelmas – if the Michael Festival is to be rightly understood – we must celebrate that which lives spiritually in the sulphurizing and meteorizing process in human beings. Especially at Michaelmas we should stand before human consciousness in its whole soul-spiritual significance. Then we will be able to say to ourselves: "You will become lord of this process, which otherwise takes its natural course outside your consciousness, if (just as you bow thankfully before the birth of the Redeemer at Christmas and experience Easter with deeper inner response) you now learn to experience how during this autumn festival of Michael there should grow in you all that goes

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against love of ease, against anxiety, and makes for the unfolding of inner initiative and free, strong, courageous will." The Festival of Strong Will: that is how we should conceive of the Michael Festival. If that is done, if the knowledge of nature becomes true, spiritual human self-consciousness, then the Michael Festival will shine out in its true colors.

But before human beings can think of celebrating the Michael Festival, there will have to be a renewal in human souls. It is the renewal of the whole human soul-disposition that should be celebrated at the Michael Festival-not as an outward or conventional ceremony, but as a festival which renews the whole inner person.

Then, out of all I have described, the majestic image of Michael and the Dragon will arise once more. But this picture of Michael and the Dragon paints itself out of the cosmos. The Dragon paints itself for us, forming its body out of bluish-yellow sulphur streams. We see the Dragon shaping itself in shimmering clouds of radiance out of the sulphur-vapors; and over the Dragon rises the figure of Michael: Michael with his sword.

We shall picture this rightly only if we see the space where Michael displays his power and his lordship over the Dragon as filled not with indifferent clouds but with showers of meteoric iron. These showers take form from the power that streams out from Michael's heart; they are welded together into the sword of Michael, who overcomes the Dragon with his sword of meteoric iron.

If we understand what is going on in the universe and in human beings, then the cosmos paints out of its own forces. Then in our paintings we will not lay on this or that color according to human ideas, but will paint, in harmony with divine powers, the world which expresses their being, the whole being of Michael and the Dragon, as it can hover before us. Ancient pictures and images can be renewed if we can paint in this way out of direct contemplation of the cosmos. Then our pictures will show what is really there, and not what fanciful individuals may somehow portray in images of Michael and the Dragon.

Then humanity will come to understand these things, and to reflect on them with understanding, and will bring mind and feeling and will to meet the autumn in the course of the year. Then at the beginning of autumn, at the Michael Festival, the picture of Michael with the Dragon will stand there to act as a powerful summons, a powerful spur to action, which must work on human beings in the midst of the events of our times. And then we shall understand how this impulse points symbolically to something in which the whole destiny, perhaps indeed the tragedy, of our epoch is being played out.

During the last three or four centuries we have developed a magnificent natural science and a far-reaching technology, based on the most widely-distributed material to be found on earth. We have learned to make out of iron nearly all the most essential and important things produced by humankind in a materialistic age. In our locomotives, our factories, on all sides we see how we have built up this whole material civilization on iron, or on steel, which is only iron transformed. And all the uses to which iron is put are a symbolic indication of how we have built our whole life and outlook out of matter and want to go on doing so. But that is a downward-leading path. We can rescue ourselves from these impending dangers only if we start to spiritualize life in this very domain where iron is used, if we penetrate through what surrounds it to the spiritual. We must turn from the iron which is used for making engines and look up again to the meteoric iron which showers down from the cosmos to the earth and is the outer material from which the power of Michael is forged. Humanity must come to see the great significance of the following words: "Here on earth, in this epoch of materialism, you have made use of iron, in accordance with the insight gained from your observation of matter. Just as you must transform your vision of matter through the development of natural science into Spiritual Science, so must you rise from your former idea of iron to a perception of meteoric iron, the iron of Michael's sword. Then healing will come from what you can make of it."

This is the content of the saying:

O Humanity,
You mold it (iron) to your service,

You reveal it (iron) according to the value of its substance
In many of your works.
Yet it will bring you healing
Only when it reveals to you
The lofty power of its spirit.

That is, the lofty power of Michael, with the sword he has welded together in cosmic space out of meteoric iron. Healing will come when our material civilization proves capable of spiritualizing the power of iron into the power of Michael-Iron, which gives human beings self-consciousness instead of mere nature-consciousness.

FOUR

The Tasks of the Michael Age

(From: Rudolf Steiner, *Rosicrucianism and Modern Initiation*, pp. 83-98)

Dornach, January 13, 1924

The Michael period into which the world entered in the last third of the nineteenth century, and into which humanity must now enter with increasing consciousness, is very different from former periods of Michael leadership. You know, of course, that as evolution goes forward, the seven great Archangelic Spirits enter human life from time to time, one after another. Thus, after a certain time has elapsed, a particular guidance of the world – the guidance of Gabriel or Uriel, Raphael, or Michael – is repeated. Our present Michael period is, however, essentially different from the preceding periods of Michael. This is due to the fact that, since the first third of the fifteenth century, humanity has been standing in a quite different relation to the spiritual world than ever before. And this new relation to the spiritual world necessarily alters the character of a human being's relation to that Spirit now guiding the destinies of humankind, whom we call by the ancient name of Michael. Recently I have spoken to you again of the Rosicrucian Movement. Rosicrucianism, as I have shown you, degenerated in many quarters into charlatany. Indeed, most of what has come down to its tinder that name is pure charlatany. Nevertheless, as I have explained on many former occasions, an individuality did exist who may rightly be described by the name of Christian Rosenkrenz. [See Rudolf Steiner, *The Temple Legend; Theosophy of the Rosicrucian; Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkrenz*; also *A Christian Rosenkrenz Anthology* (edited by Paul M. Allen).] And he may be said, in a sense, to have set the example of how an enlightened individuality – a person who had knowledge of the spirit – could, at the dawn of the new phase of human evolution, enter into relation with the spiritual world.

Christian Rosenkrenz was allowed to ask many questions, to inquire concerning deeply significant riddles of existence in a way that, was quite new when compared with earlier human experiences. For you must remember that *at the same time as* Rosicrucianism was arising and directing human minds – with "Faustian" endeavor, as it was sometimes called in later times – toward the spiritual world, abstract natural science was also arising. The bearers of this modern stream of spiritual life – people like Galileo, Giordano Bruno, Copernicus, or Kepler – worthy as they are of our fullest recognition, were in a different situation from the Rosicrucians, who wanted to foster, not a merely formal or abstract, but a true knowledge of the world. The Rosicrucians perceived how completely times had changed for the whole of human life, and therewith how completely the relation of the Gods to humankind had also changed. We might describe it as follows.

Until the fourth century A.D., and indeed as late as the twelfth or thirteenth century, human beings were still able to draw forth from themselves real knowledge of the spiritual world,

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even if this was only rudimentary. By practicing the exercises given in the ancient Mysteries, they could draw forth from themselves the secrets of existence. For it really was the case in ancient humanity that what Initiates had to say to their fellow human beings, they drew forth from the depths of their own souls, brought it up to the surface of thought, to the world of ideas. They were quite conscious that they were drawing forth their knowledge from the inner being of the human soul. The spiritual exercises they undertook were intended, as you know, to shake the human heart to its depths, to induce in the heart and mind experiences a person does not undergo in the ordinary round of life. Thereby the secrets of the world of the Gods were, one might say, drawn forth from human depths, from the innermost being of humanity.

One cannot, however, see these secrets in the act of drawing them forth. In the old instinctive clairvoyance human beings did, it is true, behold the secrets of the world; they saw them in Imagination, heard them in Inspiration, united with them in Intuition. But all this is impossible as long as we stand there *alone* – just as little as it is possible for me to draw you a triangle without a blackboard to draw it on. The triangle I draw on the board portrays to me what I carry in a purely spiritual way within me. The triangle as a whole – all the laws of the triangle – are in me; and when I draw the triangle on the board, I bring home to myself what is really already there all the time within me. That is what happens when we draw diagrams. And it is the same when it is a question of deriving real knowledge out of our being – the being of humanity – as was done in the ancient Mysteries. This knowledge too must, in a sense, be *written* somewhere. Every such knowledge, if it is to be seen in the Spirit, must be inscribed in that which has been called from time immemorial the "astral light," i.e., in the fine substantiality of the Akasha. Everything must be written there; and human beings must be able to develop the faculty of writing in the astral light.

This faculty has depended on many different things in the course of human evolution. I do not intend to speak here of far-off pristine ages, and will leave on one side the first post-Atlantean epoch, the ancient Indian. At that time things were somewhat different. Let us begin then with the ancient Persian epoch, as you will find it described in *An Outline of Occult Science*. That time was one of instinctive clairvoyance. There was knowledge of the divine-spiritual world; and – inasmuch as the *earth*, the solid earth, afforded *resistance* – this knowledge could be written into the astral light for humanity to behold it. Such writing itself is done, needless to say, with spiritual organs; but even spiritual organs require a basis of resistance. The things that are seen in the Spirit are not, of course, inscribed onto the earth itself. Rather, they are written into the astral light, and the earth acts as a ground of resistance. In the old Persian epoch seers could feel the resistance of the earth; and only thereby could the perceptions they drew forth from their inner being grow into actual visions.

In the next epoch, the Egypto-Chaldean, all the knowledge that the Initiates drew forth from their souls was able to be written into the astral light, with the help of the *fluid* element. One must have a clear and correct picture of this development from epoch to epoch. Initiates of the Old Persian epoch looked to the solid earth. Wherever they saw plants or stones around them, the astral light reflected the inner vision back to them. Initiates of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, for their part, looked into the sea or the river – into the falling rain or the rising mist. Looking into the river or the sea, they saw the secrets that endure. But the secrets relative to the transient – to the creations of the Gods in things that are transient – these they beheld in the downpouring rain or the ascending mist. You must familiarize yourselves with the idea that the ancients did not look at mist and rain in the prosaic, matter-of-fact way that we do today. Rain and mist said a great deal to the Egypto-Chaldeans – revealed the secrets of the Gods to them.

Then, in the Greco-Latin period, the visions were like a *Fata Morgana* in the air. The Greeks saw Zeus, saw the Gods, in the astral light, but they had the feeling that the astral light only reflected the Gods under certain conditions. Hence the Greeks assigned their Gods to special places – places where the air could offer the resistance required for inscription in the astral light. Thus it remained until the fourth century after Christ. Even among the early Church Fathers, and above all among the Greek Fathers, there were many who – by means of the resistance of the air – saw this *Fata Morgana* of their own spiritual visions in the astral

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light. (You may find it confirmed in their writings.) Thus they had clear knowledge of the fact that the Logos, the Divine Word, revealed Himself out of human beings – through Nature. But in the course of time this knowledge faded, although feeble echoes of it still continued in a few specially gifted persons, even as late as the twelfth or thirteenth century. But when the age of abstract knowledge came – when human beings became entirely dependent on the logical sequence of ideas and the results of sense observation – then neither earth, water, nor air afforded resistance to the astral light, but only the element of the warmth ether. This is not known, of course, to those who are completely wrapped up in abstract thoughts. Such people have no idea that these abstract thoughts of theirs are written into the astral light. But indeed they are; and it is the element of warmth ether alone that affords them the resistance they need. And now we find the following.

Remember what I said, that in the ancient Persian epoch people had the solid earth as a resistance to behold what they had inscribed into the astral light. And what is thus received into the astral light – everything for which the solid earth is the resistance – rays out, but only as far as the sphere of the Moon. Further it cannot go. Thence, it rays back again. Hence it remains, so to speak, with the earth. Humans behold the secrets reflected by virtue of the earth; the secrets remain, however, because of the pressure of the lunar sphere.

Now let us look at the Egypto-Chaldean epoch. Here it is the water on the earth that reflects. What is thus reflected goes out as far as the Saturn sphere. And now it is Saturn that "presses," and so makes it possible for humans to "hold" on earth what they behold in Spirit. And if we go on into the Greco-Latin period – extending as it does right into the twelfth or thirteenth century – we find the visions inscribed in the astral light by virtue of the air. This time what is inscribed goes right to the boundary of the cosmic sphere before it returns. It is now much more fleeting; yet it is still such that one could remain united with one's visions. The Initiates of all these epochs therefore knew every time that such spiritual vision as they had enjoyed – through the resistance of earth or water or air – remained: the visions were there. But coming into modern times, when only the element of the warmth ether was left to offer resistance, we find that the element of the warmth ether carries all that is written into it out into cosmic realms, right out of space into the Spiritual worlds. It is no longer there!

It is so indeed, my friends. Take the most pedantic of modern professors with his ideas. He must of course *have* ideas – some of them have none at, all! – but assuming that the professor has ideas, then through the instrumentality of the warmth ether these ideas are gathered up in the astral light. But the warmth ether is transient and fleeting; in it, everything immediately becomes merged and fused, and goes out into the cosmic distances.

Such a person as Christian Rosenkretz knew that the Initiates of old had lived right with their visions. They had fastened and confirmed what they beheld, knowing that it was there, reflected somewhere in the heavens – be it in the Moon sphere or in the planetary sphere, or at the end of the Universe. But now, nothing at all was reflected. For the immediate, wide-awake vision of a human being, nothing at all was reflected. People could discover ideas about Nature, the Copernican cosmology could arise, all manner of ideas could be evolved – but in the warmth ether these ideas were simply scattered abroad and merged into the cosmic vastness.

Then it came about that Christian Rosenkretz, under the inspiration of a higher Spirit, found a way to perceive the reflected radiation after all, in spite of the fact that one had to work with a reflection depending on the warmth ether alone. This happened in the following way. Other states of consciousness – dim, subconscious and sleeplike – were called into play, states in which a person is *normally* outside the body. Then it became perceptible that what is discovered by means of modern abstract ideas is inscribed after all – not in space, but written in the spiritual world. This, then, is what we find in the Rosicrucian Movement. The Rosicrucians, living as they were in a transitional stage, acquainted themselves with all that could be discovered about nature in that epoch, received it into themselves and assimilated it as only a human being can assimilate it. What for others was science, they enhanced into true wisdom. Holding it in their souls, they then tried, after deep meditation, to pass into sleep in a condition of the highest possible purity. And thus it happened that the divine-

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spiritual worlds – no longer just the spatial end of the universe, but the divine-spiritual worlds themselves – brought back to them in a *spiritually real language* what had first been apprehended in abstract ideas.

The Copernican cosmology, for example, was taught in Rosicrucian schools; but in special states of consciousness the ideas contained in it came back in the form I have explained to you. It was the Rosicrucians, above all, who released that what a person receives in the form of modern knowledge must first be carried forth, so to speak, must first be *offered to the Gods*, so that the Gods may translate it into their language and then give it back again to human beings.

This possibility has remained up to the present. It is still true, my dear friends. If you are touched by the Rosicrucian principle of Initiation as understood among us here, study the system of Haeckel, with all its materialism; study it, and at the same time permeate yourselves with the methods of cognition indicated in *How To Know Higher Worlds*. Take what you learn in Haeckel's *Anthropogenesis*. [*Anthropogenie oder Entwicklungsgeschichte des Menschen* (Anthropogeny or the Evolutionary History of Humanity), 1874] In that form it may very likely repel you. Master it nevertheless; learn all that can be learned about it through studying today's natural science, and then carry it towards the Gods. If you do this, you will find what is said concerning evolution in *Occult Science*.

Such is the connection between the feeble, shadowy knowledge that we can acquire with the physical body and the knowledge the Gods can give us, if we first duly prepare ourselves by studying this external knowledge in the right spirit. For what a person can learn here on earth a person must first bring to the Gods. The times, you see, have changed!

Another thing has happened. Let people strive as they will today, they can no longer draw anything forth from themselves as ancient Initiates once did. It all becomes impure, permeated with instincts – as is evident in the case of spiritualistic mediums, and other morbid or pathological conditions. All that arises merely from within becomes impure. The time for such creations from within is over and gone – actually it was already past in the twelfth or thirteenth century. What has happened can be expressed approximately as follows.

The Old Persian Initiates wrote a great deal into the astral light with the help of the resistance of the solid earth. When the first Initiate of the Old Persian epoch appeared, the whole of the astral light destined for humanity was like an unwritten slate. ... The whole of Nature, all the elements – the solid, the liquid, the airy, and the warm – was then an unwritten slate and the Old Persian Initiates wrote on this slate as much as could be written by making use of the earth's resistance. This was how, to begin with, the secrets destined to come to humanity from the Gods were inscribed in the astral light. The tablet was then partially inscribed; yet, in another respect, it was still empty. Thus the Initiates of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch were able to continue the writing in their way, gaining their visions by the resistance of water. And so a second portion of the tablet was inscribed. Then came the Greek Initiates; they inscribed a third portion. And now the tablet of nature was fully inscribed. By the thirteenth or fourteenth century, it was fully inscribed.

Then human beings began to write into the warmth ether – the warmth-ether that is spread abroad, that disperses. For a time until the nineteenth century – people continued to write in the warmth ether; they had, however, no inkling that these experiences of theirs are also inscribed in the astral light. But now, my dear friends, the time has come when human beings must recognize that it is not out of themselves, in the old sense, that they can find the secrets of the world, but only by preparing themselves in heart and mind to read what is written on the astral tablet which is now full of writing. This we must prepare to do today; for this we must make ourselves ripe. No longer have we to draw forth the truth from ourselves like Initiates of old; **we must be able to read all that is written in the astral light**. If we succeed in doing this, then **what we gain from the warmth ether works as an inspiration**. It works in such a way that the Gods come to meet us; they bring to us in its reality what we have acquired by our own efforts here on earth. And what we receive in this way from the warmth ether reacts in turn on all that stands written on the tablet by virtue of air, water and

earth.

Thus natural science is today the true basis for spiritual seership. Learn first by the study of science to know the properties of air, water and earth. Then, having attained the corresponding inner faculties, you will find that as you gaze into the airy, the watery, and the earthly element, the astral light will stream forth – and not like some vague mist or cloud, but so that we can read in it the secrets of world-existence and the secrets of human life.

What, then, do we read there? We, the humanity of today, read what we ourselves have written in it. For what does it mean, to say that the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians wrote in the astral light? It means: *we ourselves wrote it there in our former lives on earth!*

You see, my dear friends, just as our own memory of the common things that we experience in earthly life preserves these things for us, so does the astral light preserve for us what we have written in it. The astral light is spread around us – a fully written tablet with respect to the secrets which we ourselves have inscribed. We must, read, if we would rediscover the secrets of nature. A kind of *evolution* memory must arise in humankind. **A consciousness must gradually arise that such a thing as an evolution memory exists**, and that to recover former epochs of culture the humanity today must read in the astral light just as we, individually, at a later age in life, read in our own youth with the help of our ordinary memory. This reality must come into human consciousness, and it is with this in view that I gave the lectures at Christmas. [See Rudolf Steiner, *The Christmas Conference (for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society 1923/24)*.] I wanted you to see how we have to draw forth from the astral light the secrets that we need today. The old initiation was directed mainly to the *subjective* life; the new initiation concentrates on the *objective*. That is the great difference. For all that was subjective – all that the Gods have secreted into humanity – has been written into the outer world. What they secreted in the sentient body came out in the Old Persian epoch; what they secreted in the intellectual or mind-soul came out during the Greek epoch. The spiritual soul we are now to evolve is independent; it brings forth nothing more out of itself. The spiritual soul stands over against what is already there. As human beings we must find our true humanity again in the astral light.

That, then, is how it was with the Rosicrucian Movement. In a time of transition, it had to content itself with entering into certain dreamlike conditions and, as it were, dreaming the higher truth of that which science discovers in a dry, matter-of-fact way, out of the nature that is all around us. But since the beginning of the Michael epoch, since the end of the 1870's, the situation has been different. The same thing that was attained in the time of the old Rosicrucians in the way described above, can now be attained in a conscious way. Today, therefore, we can say: We no longer need that other condition, which was half-conscious, what we need is a state of enhanced consciousness. Then, with the knowledge of nature which we acquire, **we can dive into the higher world; and the knowledge we have acquired will come to meet us from that higher world**. We can read again what has been written in the astral light; and as we do so, it comes to meet us in spiritual reality. We carry up into a spiritual world the knowledge of nature attained here, or we carry up thither the creations of naturalistic art, or again the feelings we develop out of a religion that works naturalistically in the soul – for even religion has become naturalistic nowadays. And as we carry all this up into the spiritual, then, provided we develop the necessary faculties, we do indeed encounter Michael.

So we may say: the old Rosicrucian Movement is characterized by the fact that its most illumined spirits had an intense longing to meet Michael; but they could only do so, as it were, *in dream*. Since the end of the last third of the nineteenth century, human beings can meet Michael in the Spirit, in a *fully conscious way*.

Michael, however, is a Being with this peculiar characteristic: **He reveals nothing if we ourselves do not bring him something from our diligent spiritual work on earth**. Mikhael is a silent spirit, silent and reserved. The other ruling Archangels are Spirits who talk a great deal – in a spiritual sense, of course. **But Michael is taciturn**. He is a Spirit who says very little. At most he will now and then give brief directions. **What we have to learn**

from Michael is not really the word, but, if I may so express it, the *look*; it is the power, the direction, of his gaze that we must learn from.

This is because Michael concerns himself most of all with *what* humanity creates out of the Spirit. **Michael lives with the consequences of what human beings have created.** The other Spirits live more with the cause; Michael lives with the consequences. The other Spirits kindle in human beings the impulses for what they ought to do. **Michael wants to be the spiritual hero of freedom; Michael allows people to act, and then takes what becomes of human deeds, receives it and carries it on and out into the cosmos, to continue in the cosmos what humans themselves cannot yet do with it.**

With other Beings of the Hierarchy of Archangels, we have the feeling that impulses are coming toward us from them. In greater or lesser degree, impulses to do this or that come from them. Michael is the Spirit from whom in our time impulses do not come; for the present. Michael Age is his most characteristic epoch. It is the epoch, namely, when things are to arise out of human freedom. But when a person has once done something out of his or her own inner freedom, consciously or unconsciously kindled by the reading of the astral light, then Michael carries that human earthly deed out into the cosmos, that it may become a cosmic deed. **Michael takes care of the results,** the other Spirits are concerned rather with causes.

Michael is, however, not merely a silent, taciturn Spirit. In relation to many things on earth with which a human being still lives today, **Michael meets humanity with a very clear gesture of repulsion.** For example, we can feel how Michael constantly repels and pushes aside with a gesture of deprecation all knowledge about human, animal, or plant life that tends to lay stress on inherited characteristics, on all that is inherited in physical nature. **Michael means to show that such knowledge cannot help human beings at all in relation to the spiritual world.** What we can discover in the human and animal and plant kingdoms that is independent of the purely hereditary nature – that alone can be carried up before Michael. *Then we* receive, not the eloquent gesture of deprecation, but **the look of approval telling us that it is a thought rightly conceived in harmony with cosmic guidance.** For this is what we learn increasingly to strive for: so to direct our thoughts that we may strike through to the astral light and behold the secrets of existence, and then come before Michael and receive his approving look telling us, That is right, that is in harmony with the cosmic guidance.

Michael also sternly rejects all separating elements – such as human languages. So long as we only clothe our knowledge each in our own language, and do not carry it right up into the thoughts, we cannot come near Michael. On this account, there is a very significant battle waging today in the spiritual world. On the one hand, the Michael-Impulse has entered the human evolution. The Michael-Impulse is there. On the other hand, there is much in human evolution that does not want to receive the Michael-Impulse, that wants to reject it. Among the things that would reject the Impulse of Michael today are feelings of nationality. They flared up in the nineteenth century, and have become strong in the twentieth-stronger and stronger. Many things have been ordered – or rather, sadly disordered – in accordance with this principle of nationality.

This is in direct opposition to the Michael principle. It contains Ahrimanic forces that strive against the in-pouring of the Michael-Forces into the earthly human life. Thus we see this war being waged by upward – attacking Ahrimanic spirits who would like to carry upward what comes from the inherited impulses of nationality, which Michael sternly rejects and repels.

A most lively spiritual conflict is in fact being waged today in this direction – for this is the state of affairs over a great portion of humankind. Thoughts are not present at all; people think only in words, and to think in words is no way to approach Michael. We come to Michael only when we get through the words to real inner experiences of the spirit – when we cease to hang on to words, and come through to real inner experiences of the spirit.

This is the very essence, the secret of modern Initiation: to get beyond words, to a living experience of the spirit. It is in no way contrary to a feeling for the beauty of language.

Precisely when we no longer *think* in language, we begin to *feel* it. As a true element of feeling, it begins to live in us and flow outward from us. This is the experience to which a human being today must aspire. Perhaps, to begin with, we cannot attain this experience in speech. Perhaps we can more readily find our way to it through writing. For with regard to writing, too, it must be said that human beings today do not *have* writing; writing *has them*. What do I mean by this? I mean that in our wrist, in our hand, we have a certain train of writing. We write mechanically, out of the hand. This is a thing that fetters us. We only become unfettered when we write as we paint or draw – when every letter as it stands beside the next becomes for us a thing that is painted or drawn. Then there is no longer what is ordinarily called a "handwriting." We *draw* the *form* of the letter. Our relation to the letter is objective; we see it before us – that is the essential thing.

For this reason, strange as it may sound, in certain Rosicrucian schools learning to write was prohibited up to the fourteenth or fifteenth year of age; so that the form, the mechanism which comes to expression in writing, did not enter the human organism. Only when one's intelligence was more developed did one approach the form of the letter, and then it was so arranged that simultaneously with learning the conventional letters, needed for human intercourse, one had to learn other, specifically Rosicrucian letters, which are now supposed to have been a secret script. But that was not intended; the idea was that for an A one should learn at the same time another sign: O. For then, one would not hold fast to the sign, but get free of it and feel the real A as something higher than any mere sign, be it A or O. Otherwise, the *letter* would be identified with that which comes forth from the human being, soaring and hovering around him or her as *sound*.

With Rosicrucianism many things found their way to the people at large. It was one of their fundamental principles, that from the small circles in which they were united, Rosicrucians should go out into the world – generally working, as I have told you, as doctors of medicine. But, at the same time, while they practiced medicine, they spread knowledge of many things in the wide circles into which they came. Moreover, together with such knowledge, certain moods and feelings were spread. We find such moods and feelings wherever the Rosicrucian stream left its traces. Sometimes they even assume grotesque forms. For instance, out of such moods and feelings of soul, people came to regard the whole of our modern relationship to writing – and *a fortiori*, to printing – as a black art. For it is quite true, nothing hinders one more from reading in the astral light than ordinary writing. This artificial fixing hinders one very much from reading in the astral light. One has always first to overcome it when one wants to read in the astral light.

At this point two things come together, one of which I mentioned a short while ago. I told you how in the production of spiritual knowledge the human being must always be present with full *inner activity*. I confess that I myself have a number of notebooks in which I write or record in some way the results I come to. I generally do not look at them again! Only by calling into activity not the head alone but the whole person, one enables these perceptions – which must indeed take hold of the entire being – to come forth, to find expression. A person who does this will gradually grow accustomed not to care so much for what he or she sees physically, and that is already fixed, but will try to remain in the activity, in order not to spoil the faculty of seeing in the astral light. It is good to practice this reticence. As far as possible, when fixing things in ordinary writing, one should not adhere to writing as such, but, either draw and redraw the letters with a certain aesthetic pleasure (for then it is as though one were painting and it becomes an art). Certainly, one should abstain from reflecting upon what one has written. In this way one learns not to spoil the impressions in the astral light.

If we are obliged to relate to writing in the modern way, we mar our spiritual progress. For this reason, in Waldorf education, great care is taken that the child does not go so far in writing as is usual in the educational methods of today. Care is taken to enable him to remain within the spiritual, for that is essential.

The world today must find the way to accept once more the principle of initiation among the principles of civilization. Only thereby will it come about that human beings, here on earth, will gather in their souls something with which they can go before Michael, so

as to meet Michael's approving gaze, the look that says: "That is right, that is cosmically right." "Thereby the will is fastened and made firm, and thereby humanity is incorporated in the spiritual progress of the universe. Humanity itself thus becomes a co-worker in what Michael seeks to instill into human earthly evolution – beginning now in this present Michael epoch....

FIVE

From the Gabriel to the Michael Age

(From: Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships (Esoteric Studies)*,
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... In speaking of a happening such as this Michael Event, we must always remember that the world develops by stages. When we study the evolution of the world with the faculties that we possess by virtue of our present human earthly life between birth and death, we see humanity evolving on the earth. We see ancient peoples arising from still earlier peoples. We see the Greeks and the Romans gradually emerge out of a background of very ancient Oriental civilizations – from the Indian, the Chinese, the Arabian and the Egypto-Chaldean-peoples. Then we come to the Middle Ages and finally to our own modern age with all its aberrations, but also with its great technical achievements. And not only is there this external development of peoples but behind it, as it were, evolution is also taking place. We can see, too, that this evolution is being undergone not only by humanity but also by spiritual Beings who are connected in certain ways with human evolution. In their ranks are the Beings called the *Angeloi* – Angels in Christian terminology. Angels are directly connected with the *individual* human being. Insofar as guidance from one earthly life to another is necessary, they lead or guide each individual. They are Guardians and Protectors whenever and wherever protection is needed. Thus, though supersensible and imperceptible to earthly sight, the *Angeloi* are directly connected with the evolution of humanity.

In the next immediately adjacent spiritual realm, the spiritual Beings whom we call the Hierarchy of the *Archangeloi*, the Archangels, unfold their activity. The *Archangeloi* have to do with much that also plays a part in the evolution of humanity. They have to do, not with the individual human being, but with groups of human beings. Thus, as I have said in many anthroposophical lectures, the evolution of the *peoples* is under the rulership of Archangelic Beings. [See this volume pp. 3-6] But it is also the case that certain epochs in earthly evolution receive their essential impulses from individual *Archangeloi*. For example, during the three centuries preceding the last third of the nineteenth century, namely during the nineteenth, eighteenth, seventeenth centuries and part of the sixteenth, we must think of the civilized world as being essentially under the dominion of the Archangel known to Christians capable of speaking of these things, as Gabriel. This period was therefore the Age of Gabriel.

This particular Gabriel Age is of great significance for the whole evolution of humanity in modern times. This significance derives from the fact that, since the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, human beings on earth have gradually been able to realize the following: Through the Mystery of Golgotha, Christ, the sublime Being of the Sun, has come down to the earth. He has descended from the Sun to the earth, entering into the body of Jesus and uniting Himself with the earth's destiny. But although the Christ Being has remained united with the earth, it was not possible during the successive Archangelic rulerships from the time of the Mystery of Golgotha to that of Gabriel, for the Christ-Impulse itself to actually lay hold of the inner physical and etheric forces of humanity. This first became possible under the Gabriel-Impulse which began to work about three hundred years before the last third of the

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nineteenth century. Thus, in reality, it is only since that time that *by way of the forces of heredity themselves* the Christ-Impulse has been able to penetrate humanity inwardly. As yet, this has not been achieved.

Gabriel rules over the whole realm of the physical forces of heredity within humanity. Gabriel is the supersensible Spirit who is connected essentially with the sequence of the generations, who is (if I may put it so) the great Guardian Spirit of mothers who bring the children into the world. Gabriel has to do with births, with the embryonic development of human beings. The forces of Gabriel work in the *spiritual* processes underlying the physical process of reproduction. And so it is only since this recent Gabriel rulership that the physical reproduction of humanity on earth has come into connection in the real sense with the Christ-Impulse.

From the end of the 1870's, the rulership of *Michael* begins. It is a rulership altogether different in character from that of Gabriel. Whereas the rulership of the Archangel in the three preceding centuries comes to expression in spiritual impulses working in the physical, **the rulership of Michael has above all to do with the powers of the intelligence in humankind** – with everything, therefore, that has to do with human intellectual, spiritual, and cultural evolution. In any study of the earthly circumstances of humanity it is extremely important to realize that Gabriel's rulership, which in the spiritual sphere has an effect upon what is most deeply *physical*, is always followed by the regency of **Michael, who has to do with the *spiritual* element in culture.** The Archangel Gabriel is the divine Guardian of the process of physical propagation. But the Spirit who has to do with the development of the sciences, the arts, and the cultural element of the epoch, is the Archangel known in Christianity as Michael.

Seven successive Archangelic rulerships rule over the civilizations that are predominant in every epoch. Six other such rulerships have therefore preceded the present rulership of Michael. And if, have beginning with Gabriel, we go backwards through these, we come to an epoch when Michael again held sway. Every such rulership, therefore, is always the repetition of earlier, identical rulerships, and the evolution of the Archangels themselves takes place through this cyclic progress. After a period of about two thousand years, the same Archangel always assumes the rulership again within the predominating civilization.

But these periods of rulership, each of which lasts for a little over three hundred years, are essentially different from one another. The difference is not always as great as it is between the rulerships of Michael and Gabriel, but the rulerships are, nevertheless, essentially different. And here we can say: Each reign of Gabriel is preparatory to an age when peoples become more widely separated from one another and more differentiated. In the age following his dominion nationalistic tendencies also become accentuated. So, if you ask why it is that such strong nationalistic feeling is asserting itself today under the rulership of Michael, which has now begun, the answer is that preparation took place spiritually a long time ago; the influence worked on and then began to decline, but the aftereffects – often worse than the event itself – continue. Only by degrees can the impulse of Michael make its way into what is, to a great extent, a legacy from the past reign of Gabriel. But always, when an age of Michael dawns, a longing begins to arise in human beings to overcome racial distinctions and to spread through all the peoples living on the earth the highest and most spiritual form of culture produced by that particular age. **Michael's rulership is always characterized by the growth of *cosmopolitanism*, by the spread of a spiritual impulse among peoples who are ready to receive it, no matter what language they speak.** Of the seven Archangels who send their impulses into the evolution of humanity, Michael is always the one who gives the cosmopolitan impulse – and at the same time the impulse for the spreading of whatever is of most intrinsic value in a particular epoch.

If we turn now to earlier times in human evolution and ask ourselves in what period the previous Michael Age occurred, we come to the epoch which culminated in those cosmopolitan deeds springing from the impulse of the lofty spiritual culture of Greece, whose fruits were carried over to Asia through the campaigns of Alexander. There, developing on the foundations of ancient culture, we see the urge to take the spiritual culture of Greece –

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the little country of Greece – over to the Oriental peoples, to Egypt. There is an urge to spread a cosmopolitan impulse in this way among all peoples able to receive it. This cosmopolitan impulse, this urge of the earlier Age of Michael, to spread over the world all that the Greek culture had achieved for humanity, was of the greatest possible significance. The crowning triumph of that Age was represented, in a certain sense, by the Egyptian city of Alexandria in its prime.

These things came to pass in the preceding Age of Michael. Thereafter, the other six Archangels assume in time their dominions. And in the last third of the nineteenth century, at the end of the seventies, a new Michael Age begins. But never yet in the whole of earthly evolution has the difference between two Ages of Michael been as great as that, between the Michael Age at the time of Alexander and the one in which we have been living since the end of the 1870's. For between these two reigns of Michael falls the event which gives earthly evolution its true meaning: The Mystery of Golgotha.

Let us now consider what it is that Michael has to administer in the spiritual Cosmos. It is **Michael's task to administer a power that is essentially *spiritual*, reaching its zenith in the human faculty of intellectual understanding.** Michael is not the Spirit who, if I may put it so, cultivates intellectuality per se; **the spirituality he bestows strives to bring enlightenment to humankind in the form of ideas and thoughts – but ideas and thoughts that grasp the spiritual.** Michael's wish is that human beings shall be free beings – but beings who can see revelations from the spiritual worlds in what comes to them as concepts and thoughts.

And now think of the Michael Age at the time of Alexander. As I have so often said, human beings in our day are extremely clever. That is to say, they form concepts, they have ideas. They are intellectual, possessing as it were a *self-made* intellectuality. People were clever, too, in the days of Alexander. But if they had been asked in those times, Whence do you derive your concepts, your ideas? They would not have said, We have produced them out of ourselves.... No, they received into themselves the spiritual revelations, and together with these revelations, the ideas. They did not regard the ideas as something which we evolve out of ourselves, but as something revealed to us by our spiritual nature. The task of Michael at that time was to administer this *heavenly* Intellectuality (intelligence or intellectual ability) in contrast to earthly intellectuality. Michael was the greatest of the Archangels who have their abode on the Sun. He was the Spirit who sent down from the Sun to the earth not only the Sun's physical-etheric rays but, in them, the inspired Intellectuality. And in those past times human beings knew: the power of Intelligence on earth is a gift of the heavens, of the Sun; it is sent, down from the Sun. And the one who actually sends the spiritual Intellectuality down to the earth is Michael. In the ancient Sun Mysteries this wonderful Initiation-teaching was given: Michael dwells on the Sun; there he administers the Cosmic Intelligence. This Cosmic Intelligence, inspired into human beings, is a gift of Michael.

Then came the epoch when human beings were to be made ready to unfold intellect out of their own, individual soul forces; they were not merely to receive Cosmic Intelligence through revelation but to evolve Intelligence out of their inner forces. Preparation for this was made by Aristotelianism – that remarkable philosophy which arose in the twilight period of Greek culture and was the impulse underlying the campaigns of Alexander the Great in Africa and Asia.

By means of Aristotelianism, earthly Intelligence emerged as though from the shell of the Cosmic Intelligence. And from what came to be known as Aristotelian logic there arose that intellectual framework upon which the thinking of all subsequent centuries was based and which conditioned human intelligence.

And now you must conceive that through this single deed the Michael-Impulse culminated, earthly-human intelligence was established while, as a result of the campaigns of Alexander, the culture of Greece was imprinted upon those peoples who at that time were ready to receive the cosmopolitan impulse.

The epoch of Michael was followed by that of *Oriphiel*. The Archangel Oriphiel assumed dominion. The Mystery of Golgotha took place. At the beginning of the Christian era, those

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human souls who had been conscious of the leadership of the Archangel Michael in Alexander's time and had participated in the deeds of which I have just spoken, were gathered around Michael in the realm of the Sun. Michael had relinquished his dominion for the time being to Oriphiel, and in the realm of the Sun, together with those human souls who were to be his servants, Michael witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun.

This, too, is something of which we must be mindful. Those human souls who are connected with the Anthroposophical Movement may say to themselves: We were united with Michael in the realm of the Sun. Christ, who hitherto had sent His Impulses towards the earth from the Sun, departed from the Sun in order to unite Himself with earthly evolution! Try to picture to yourselves this stupendous cosmic event that took place in realms beyond the earth. It lies within the mighty vistas open to those human souls who at that time were gathered around Michael as servants of the *Angeloï*, after Michael's rulership on earth had ended. In the realm of the Sun these souls witnessed the Christ's departure from the Sun. "He is departing... !" This was their great and overwhelming experience when Christ left in order to unite His destiny with the destiny of earthly humanity.

Truly, it is not only on the earth but in the life between death and rebirth that the souls of human beings receive the impulses for the paths they take. Above all, this was the case among those who had lived through the time of Alexander. A great and mighty impulse went forth from that moment in cosmic history when these souls witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun. They saw clearly: Cosmic Intelligence is passing over gradually from the Cosmos to the earth! And Michael, together with those around him saw that all the Intelligence, which once streamed through the Cosmos, was now sinking down, stage by stage, upon the earth.

Michael and those who belonged to him – no matter whether they were in the spiritual world or incarnate for a brief earthly life – were able to visualize the rays of the intelligence arriving, in the eighth century of the Christian era, in the earthly realm itself. And they knew that down upon the earth the Intelligence would unfold and develop further. Now, on the earth, the appearance of the first "self-made" thinkers could be observed. Hitherto, great human beings who were "thinkers" had received their thoughts by way of Inspiration. Thoughts had been inspired into them. Only now, from the eighth century A.D. were there those who could be called "self-made" thinkers – thinkers who produced their own thoughts out of themselves. And within the Archangelic host in the realm of the Sun, the mighty proclamation rang forth from Michael: The power belonging to my kingdom and under my administration in this realm is here no longer; it streams downwards to the earth and must there surge onwards!

This was the view of the earth as witnessed from the Sun from the eighth century onward. And within it was the great mystery: namely, that the forces which are pre-eminently the forces of Michael have descended from the heavens and are now upon the earth. This was the profound secret which was known to Initiates in Schools such as those I spoke of yesterday, for example, the renowned School of Chartres. [Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, Volume VI, lecture VII; also *Karmic Relationships* generally, but above all volumes III and IV. Also René Querido, *The Golden Age of Chartres*.] In earlier times, when men wished to discover the true nature of Intelligence they had been obliged, in the Mystery Centers, to look upward to the Sun. Now Intelligence was upon the earth, though not as yet very clearly perceptible. But, gradually, there was recognition that human beings were now evolving who possessed individual intelligence of their own. One of those in European civilization in whom the first sparks of personal thinking were alight was Johannes Scotus Eriugena. [See Rudolf Steiner, *The Riddles of Philosophy*; also *Occult History*, Lecture 3; *Man in the Light of Occultism, Theosophy and Philosophy*, lecture 4; also GA 204, Lecture 15 (June 2, 1921); also Christopher Bamford, *The Voice of the Eagle*.] I have often spoken of him. But there had been a few others, even before him, whose thoughts were not merely inspired, who no longer received revelations, but who could be called self-made thinkers. And now this individual thinking became more and more widespread.

But the possibility existed of making this self-produced thinking serve a particular end in earthly evolution. Consider what this self-produced thinking was: it was the sum-total of those impulses that had found their way to the earth from Michael's heavenly realm. And for

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the time being Michael was called upon to allow this Intelligence to unfold without his participation. Not until the year 1879 was he to re-assume his rulership. In the meantime, the Intelligence developed in such a way that he could not exercise dominion over the first stages. Michael could not exert influence over those who were unfolding their own, individual thoughts. His time, his rulership, had not yet come.

This profound secret of the descent of the Intelligence in the evolution of humanity was known in a few Mystery Centers over in the East. And so, within these particular Mysteries, a few chosen pupils were initiated into this secret by certain deeply spiritual, highly evolved people. Through dispensations of a nature which it is difficult for the earthly intellect to comprehend, the illustrious Court [See Rudolf Steiner, *Three Streams in Human Evolution.*] (of which I have spoken at the Goetheanum and in other places) came into touch with this secret of which certain Oriental Mysteries were fully cognizant. In the eighth and at the beginning of the ninth century, under the leadership of Haroun al Raschid, this Court wielded great power in Asia. Haroun al Raschid was a product of Arabian culture, a culture tinged with Muhammadanism. The secret of which I have spoke found its way to some of Haroun al Raschid's initiated Counselors – or to those who possessed at least a certain degree of knowledge – and the brilliance of his Court was due to the fact that it had come in touch with this secret. At this Court were concentrated all the treasures of wisdom, of art, of the truths of religious life to be found in the East – colored, of course, by Muhammadanism. In the days when, in Europe, at the Court of Charlemagne, who was a contemporary of Haroun al Raschid, people were still occupied in collating the first rudiments of grammar and everything was still in a state of semi-barbarism, there flourished in Baghdad that brilliant center of Oriental or, rather, western Asiatic spiritual life. Haroun al Raschid gathered around him men who were conversant with the great traditions of the Eastern Mysteries. And he had by his side one particular Counselor who had been an Initiate in earlier times and whose spiritual driving forces were still influenced by the previous incarnations. He was the organizer of all that was cultivated at the Court of Haroun al Raschid in the domains of geometry, chemistry, physics, music, architecture, and the other arts – above all, a distinguished art of poetry. In this renowned and scintillating assembly of sages, it was felt, more, or less consciously: the earthly Intelligence that has come down from the heavens upon the earth must be placed in the service of Muhammadan spiritual life!

And now consider this: from the time of Muhammad and the early Caliphs onward, Arabian culture was carried from Asia across North Africa into Europe, where it spread as the result of warlike campaigns. And outstanding personalities came in the wake of those who by means of these campaigns spread Arabism as far as Spain and France and even, spiritually, the whole of western Europe. The wars waged by the Frankish kings against the Moors, against Arabism, are known to all of you ... but that is the external aspect, that is what happens in onward history ... much more important is to know how the spiritual streams flow perpetually within the evolution of humankind.

Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counselor passed through the gate of death. But they continued to pursue their earthly aims in remarkable ways after their life between death and rebirth. Their aim was to introduce Arabian modes of thinking into the European world with the help of the rudiments of the Intelligence now spreading in Europe. And so, after Haroun al Raschid had passed through the gate of death, while his soul was traversing spiritual, starry worlds, we see his gaze directed unswervingly from Baghdad across Asia Minor, to Greece, Rome, Spain, France, and then northwards to England. Throughout his life between death and rebirth his attention was directed to the South and West of Europe. And then Haroun al Raschid appeared again in a new incarnation – becoming Lord Bacon of Verulam. Bacon himself is the reincarnated Haroun al Raschid, who in the intervening time between death and rebirth had worked as I have just described.

But the other, the one who had been his wise Counselor, chose a different direction – from Baghdad across the Black Sea, through Russia and then into Middle Europe. The two individualities took different paths and directions. Haroun al Raschid passed to his next earthly goal as Lord Bacon of Verulam; the wise Counselor during his life between death and a new birth did not divert his gaze from the sphere where influences from the East can be

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increasingly potent, and he appeared again as Amos Comenius (Komenski), the great educational reformer and author of *Pan-Sophia*. And from the interworking of these two individualities who had once been together at the Court in Baghdad there subsequently arose in Europe something which unfolded – more or less at a distance from Christianity – in the form of Arabism derived from influences of that past time when the Intelligence had first fallen away from Michael on the Sun.

What came outwardly and physically to expression in wars – in the Moorish invasion – was, as we know, repelled by the Frankish kings and the other European peoples. We see how the Arabian campaigns which with such a powerful initial impetus were responsible for the spread of Muhammadan culture, were broken and brought to a halt in the West; we see Muhammadanism disappearing from the West of Europe. Nevertheless, divested of the outer forms it had assumed and the external culture it had founded, this later Arabism became *modern natural science*, and also became the basis of what Amos Comenius achieved for the world in the domain of pedagogy. And in this way the earthly Intelligence, "garrisoned" as it were by Arabism, continued to spread right on into the seventeenth century.

Here we have indicated something that lies as substrata of the soil into which we today have to sow the seeds of Anthroposophy. We must ponder deeply over the inner and spiritual reality behind these things.

In Europe, while this stream was flowing over from Asia as the spiritual continuation of that illustrious Court of Baghdad, Christianity was also developing and spreading. But the spread of Arabism in Europe was fraught with great difficulties. The natural science of Aristotle had been carried to Asia by the mighty deeds of Alexander and the impulses flowing from Hellenistic spiritual life, but it had been taken up by Arabism. In Europe, within the expanding Christian culture, Aristotelianism was at first known in a diluted form only. Then, in the manner which I have already indicated, it joined hands with Platonism – Platonism, which was based directly upon the ancient teachings of the Greek Mysteries. [See this volume, pp. 146 ff.]

But at the very outset, Aristotelianism spread in Europe by slow degrees while Platonism took the lead and prompted the establishment of schools, one of the most important of which was the School of Chartres. At Chartres, in the twelfth century, the scholars of whom I spoke yesterday (Bernard Sylvestris, Bernard of Chartres, John of Salisbury and, foremost among them all, Alanus ab Insulis) were all working. [See this lecture, note 17] In this School people spoke very differently from those whose teachings were merely an echo of Arabism. The teachings given in the School of Chartres were pure, genuine Christianity, illumined by what still remained within human reach of the ancient Mystery Wisdom. Then something of immense significance took place. The leading teachers of Chartres, who had penetrated deeply into the secrets of Christianity with their Platonism and who had no part in Arabism, went through the gate of death. Then, for a brief period at the beginning of the thirteenth century, a great "heavenly conference" took place. And when the most outstanding of the teachers – foremost among them, Alanus ab Insulis – had passed through death and were in the spiritual world, they united in a momentous cosmic deed with those who at that time were with them but who were destined in the very near future to come into earthly existence for the purpose of cultivating Aristotelianism in a new way. Among those preparing to descend were individualities who had participated with deep intensity of soul in the working of the Michael-Impulse during the time of Alexander. And at the turn of the twelfth century we may picture, for it is in keeping with the truth, a gathering together of souls who had just arrived in the spiritual world from places of Christian Initiation – of which the School of Chartres was one – and souls who were on the point of descending to the earth. In the spiritual realms, these latter souls had preserved, not Platonism, but Aristotelianism, the inner impulse of the Intelligence deriving from the Michael Age in ancient times. Now, in the spiritual world, the souls gathered together ... among them, too, were souls who could say: We were with Michael and together with him we witnessed the Intelligence streaming down from the heavens upon the earth; we were united with him too in the mighty cosmopolitan Deed enacted in earlier times when the Intelligence was still administered from the Cosmos,

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when he was still the ruler and administrator of the Intelligence.

And now, for the time being, the teachers of Chartres handed over to the Aristotelians the administration and ordering of the affairs of spiritual life on earth. Those who were now to descend and were by nature fitted to direct the earthly, personal Intelligence, took over the guidance of spiritual life from the Platonists, who could work truly only when the Intelligence was being administered "from the heavens."

It was into the Dominican Order above all that those individualities in whose souls the Michael-Impulse was still echoing on from the previous Age of Michael, found their way. And from the Dominican Order issued that Scholasticism which wrestled through many a bitter but glorious battle to master the true nature and operation of the Intelligence within the human mind. Deeply rooted in the souls of those founders of Dominican Scholasticism in the thirteenth century was this great question: What is taking place in the domain of Michael?

There were some people, later known as nominalists, who said: Concepts and ideas are merely names, they have no reality. The Nominalists were under an Ahrimanic influence, for their real aim was to banish Michael's dominion from the earth. In asserting that ideas are only names and have no reality, their actual aim was to prevent Michael's dominion from prevailing on earth. And at that time the Ahrimanic spirits whispered to those who would lend their ear: The Cosmic Intelligence has fallen away from Michael and is here, on the earth; we will not allow Michael to resume his rulership over the Intelligence! ... But in that heavenly conference – and precisely here lies its significance – Platonists and Aristotelians together formed a plan for the furtherance of the Michael-Impulses. In opposition to the Nominalists were the Realists of the Dominican Order, who maintained: Ideas and thoughts are spiritual realities contained within the phenomena of the world, they are not merely nominal. [Cf. Steiner, *The Redemption of Thinking*.]

If one understands these things, one is often reminded of them in a really remarkable way. During my last years in Vienna, one of my acquaintances among other ordained priests was Vincent Knauer, the author of the work, *Haupt-probleme der Philosophie* (The Chief Problems of Philosophy), which I have often recommended. [Vincent Knauer, 1828-1894: "My old friend Vincent Knauer, The Benedictine monk, ... was, I might say, a saintly character."] In the nineteenth century he was still involved in this conflict between nominalism and realism. He was trying to make it clear that nominalism is fallacious, and he had chosen a very apt example to illustrate his arguments. It is also given in his books. But I remember with deep satisfaction a certain occasion when I was walking with him along the Währingstrasse in Vienna. We were speaking about nominalism and realism. With all his self-controlled enthusiasm – which had something remarkable about it, something of the quality of genuine philosophy in contrast to the philosophy of others who had more or less lost this quality – Knauer said: I always make it clear to my students that the ideas made manifest in the things of the world have reality – and I tell them to think of a lamb and a wolf. The nominalists would say: A lamb is muscle, bone, matter; a wolf is muscle, bone, matter. What receives objective existence in lamb-flesh as the form, the idea of the lamb – that is only a name. "Lamb" is a name there and not, as idea, a reality. Similarly, as idea, "wolf" is not anything real but only a name.

But – Knauer went on – it is easy to refute the nominalists, for one need only say to them: Give a wolf nothing but lamb's flesh to eat for a time and no other food whatever. If the idea "lamb" contains no reality, is only a name, and if the lamb is nothing but matter, the wolf would gradually become a lamb. But it does not do so! On the contrary, it goes on being the reality "wolf." In what stands before us as the lamb, the idea "lamb" has, as it were, gathered the matter and cast it into the form. Similarly with the wolf: the idea "wolf" has gathered the matter and cast it into the form.

This was the fundamental issue in the conflict between the nominalists and the realists: the reality of what is apprehensible only by the intellect.

Thus we see that the task of the Dominicans was to work in advance, at the right time, for the next Michael rulership. And whereas in accordance with the decisions of that heavenly conference at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Platonists – the teachers of

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Chartres, for example – remained in the spiritual world and had no incarnations of significance, the Aristotelians were to work at that time for the cultivation of the Intelligence on earth. And from Scholasticism – which only much later, in the modern age, was distorted, caricatured and made Ahrimanic by Rome – has proceeded all intellectual striving insofar as it has kept free from the influence of Arabism.

So at that time two streams of spiritual life are to be perceived in Middle and Western Europe; on the one side, there is the stream with which Bacon and Amos Comenius were connected; and, on the other side, there is the stream of Scholasticism that was and is *Christian Aristotelianism* and that takes its place in the evolution of civilization in order to prepare, as was its task, for the new Age of Michael. When, during the rulership of the preceding Archangels, the Scholastics looked up into the spiritual realms they said to themselves: Michael is yonder in the heights; his rulership must be awaited. But some preparation must be made for the time when he once again becomes the Regent of all that which, through the dispensation of cosmic evolution, fell away from him in the Cosmos. This time must be prepared for! ... And so a stream began to flow which, though diverted into a false channel through Ultramontanism, continued and carried with it the impulse of preparation proceeding from the thirteenth century.

It was a stream, therefore, whose source is Aristotelian and whose influence worked directly on the ordering of the Intelligence that was now in the earthly realm. With this stream is connected that of which I spoke yesterday, saying that one who had remained a little longer with Alanus ab Insulis in the spiritual world, came down as a Dominican and brought a message from Alanus ab Insulis to an older Dominican who had descended to the earth before him. [See Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, volume VI, lecture VII.]

An intense will was present in the spiritual life of Europe to *take a strong hold of thoughts*. In the realms above the earth these happenings led, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to a great, far-reaching Act in the spiritual world, and what was later on to become *Anthroposophy* on the earth was cast into mighty Imaginations. In the first half of the nineteenth century, and even for a short period at the end of the eighteenth, those who had been Platonists under the teachers of Chartres, who were now living between death and rebirth, and those who had established Aristotelianism on earth and who had long ago passed through the gate of death – all of them were united in the heavenly realms in a great super-earthly Cult or Ritual. Through this Act all that in the twentieth century was to be spiritually established as the new Christianity after the beginning of the new Michael Age in the last third of the nineteenth century – all of this was cast into mighty Imaginations.

Many drops trickled through to the earth. Up above, in the spiritual world, in mighty, cosmic Imaginations, preparation was made for that creation of the Intelligence – an entirely spiritual creation – which was then to come forth as Anthroposophy. What trickled through made a very definite impression upon Goethe, coming to him in the form, as it were, of little reflected miniatures. The mighty pictures up above were not within Goethe's ken; he elaborated these little miniature pictures in his *Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*. Truly, it opens up a wonderful vista! [*The Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily* first appeared in 1795. It was then used as the conclusion of *The Conversations of German Emigrants*. These emigrants, uprooted by war, pass the time telling stories. There are several English editions.] The streams I have described flow on in such a way that they lead to those mighty Imaginations which take shape in the spiritual world under the guidance of Alanus ab Insulis and the others. Drops trickle through, and at the turn of the eighteenth century Goethe is inspired to write his Fairy Tale. It was, we might say, a first presentation of what had been cast in mighty Imaginations in the spiritual world at the beginning of the nineteenth, indeed by the end of the eighteenth century. In view of this great supersensible Cult during the first half of the nineteenth century, it will not surprise you that my first Mystery Play, *The Portal of Initiation* – which in a certain respect aimed at giving dramatic form to what had thus been enacted at the beginning of the nineteenth century – became in outer structure like what Goethe portrayed in his Fairy Tale. Having lived in the super-earthly realms in Imaginative form, Anthroposophy was to come down to the earth. Something came to pass in the super-earthly realms at that time. Numbers of souls who in many different epochs had been

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connected with Christianity came together with souls who had received its influences less directly. There were those who had lived on earth in the Age when the Mystery of Golgotha took place and also those who had lived on earth before it. The two groups of souls united in order that, in regions beyond the earth, Anthroposophy might be prepared. The individualities who, as I said, were around Alanus ab Insulis, and those who within the Dominican stream had established in Europe were united, too, with Brunetto Latini, the great teacher of Dante. And in this host of souls there were very many of those who, having again descended to the earth, are now coming together in the Anthroposophical Society. Those who feel the urge today to unite with one another in the Anthroposophical Society were together in supersensible regions at the beginning of the nineteenth century in order to participate in that mighty Imaginative Cult of which I have spoken.

This too is connected with the karma of the Anthroposophical Movement. It is something that one discovers, not from any rational observation of this Anthroposophical Movement in its external, earthly form only, but from observation of the threads that lead upwards into the spiritual realms. Then one perceives how this Anthroposophical Movement *descends*. At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries it is, in very truth, a "heavenly" Anthroposophical Movement. What Goethe transformed into little miniature images in *The Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily* were drops that had trickled through. But it was to come down in the real sense in the last third of the nineteenth century. Since then, Michael has been striving – moving downwards from the Sun to the earth – to take hold of the earthly Intelligence of men.

We know that since the Mystery of Golgotha Christ has been united with the earth – with humanity on earth. But, to begin with, Christ was not outwardly comprehended by human beings. We have seen also that in the age of Alexander the last phase of the rulership of Michael over the Cosmic Intelligence had descended to the earth. In accordance with the agreements reached with the Platonists, those who were connected with Michael undertook to prepare this earthly Intelligence in Scholastic realism in such a way that Michael would again be able to unite with it when, in the onward flow of civilization, he would assume his rulership at the end of the 1870s.

What matters now is that the Anthroposophical Society shall take up this, its inner task – this task which is: not to contest Michael's rulership of human thinking! Here there can be no question of fatalism. Here it can only be said that human beings must work together with the Gods. Michael inspires human beings with his own Being in order that there may appear on the earth a spirituality consonant with human personal Intelligence, in order that humans can be thinkers – and at the same time truly spiritual. This and this alone is what Michael's dominion means. This is what must be wrestled for in the Anthroposophical Movement. And then those who are working today for the Anthroposophical Movement will appear again on earth at the end of the twentieth century and will be united with the great teachers of Chartres. For according to the agreement reached in that heavenly conference at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Aristotelians and the Platonists were to appear together, working for the ever-growing prosperity of the Anthroposophical Movement in the twentieth century, in order that at the end of this century, with Platonists and Aristotelians in unison, Anthroposophy may reach a certain culmination in earthly civilization. If it is possible to work in this way, in the way predestined by Michael, then Europe and modern civilization will emerge from decline. – but in no other way than this! The leading of civilization out of decline is bound up with an understanding of Michael.

I have now led you toward an understanding of the Michael Mystery reigning over the thinking and the spiritual striving of humankind. This means – as you can realize – that through Anthroposophy something must be introduced into the spiritual evolution of the earth, for all kinds of demonic, Ahrimanic powers are taking possession of humanity. The Ahrimanic powers in many human bodies exulted in their confidence that it would no longer be possible for Michael to take over his rulership of the Cosmic Intelligence that had fallen down to the earth. And this exultation was particularly strong in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Ahriman already believed: Michael will not recover his Cosmic Intelligence that made its way from the heavens to the earth. Truly great and mighty issues are now at

stake! For this reason, it is not to be wondered at that those who stand in the midst of this battle have to go through many extraordinary experiences. ...

This battle, more than any other, is laid in the *human heart*. There, within human hearts, it is and has been waged since the last third of the nineteenth century. Decisive indeed will be what human hearts do with this Michael Impulse in the world in the course of the twentieth century. And in the course of the twentieth century, when the first century after the close of *Kali Yuga* has ended, humanity will either stand at the grave of all civilization – or at the beginning of that Age when in the souls of human beings who unite Intelligence with Spirituality in their hearts, Michael's battle will be fought out to victory.

SIX

The Michael Impulse: To Read in the Book of Nature

From: R. Steiner, *Karmic Relationships (Esoteric Studies)*, vol. III, pp. 121-30.

Dornach, August 1, 1924

... Now a great conflict arose in the Middle Ages between the leading personalities of the Dominican Order and those who, as a continuation of Asiatic Alexandrianism, found their way into Spain – Averroes, for example. [Ibn Rushd (1126-1198). Islamic philosopher. Author of works on medicine, religious law and philosophy, and above all Commentaries on Plato and Aristotle. See also Steiner, *The Redemption of Thinking*, lecture II.] What was the issue in this conflict? Averroes and those Muhammadan followers of Aristotle who sided with him said, "Intelligence is universal, common to all." They spoke only of a Pan-Intelligence – a universal Intelligence – not of an individual, human intelligence. To Averroes, individual human intelligence was only a kind of mirrored reflection of Intelligence in the individual human head. In its reality, Intelligence had only general, universal existence.

I will draw a mirror, thus, with nine parts (draws on blackboard). I might equally well have drawn not only nine parts, but hundreds, thousands, millions of parts. Over against the mirror is an object – Intelligence – that will be reflected. Thus it was for Averroes, who was so vigorously attacked by Thomas Aquinas. [Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274, *Doctor Angelicus*. Dominican religious philosopher and theologian. See also Rudolf Steiner, *The Redemption of Thinking*.] For Averroes – in the tradition of the old Michael epoch – Intelligence was Pan-Intelligence, a single Intelligence that several human heads reflected. Once the human head ceased to work, the individual intelligence ceased to be. But was this in fact true?

The truth is that what Averroes conceived was true until the end of the Alexandrian age. Until the end of that age, it was simply a cosmic and human fact. But Averroes held fast to it, while the Dominicans received human evolution in themselves. Hence they said, "It is not so." Of course, they might have said, "It was so once, but it is not so today." But they did not say this. They simply took as actual and true the condition of that time (the thirteenth century) which became even more so in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They said, "Now everyone has their own intellect, their own intelligence."

This is what really happened. And to bring these matters to full clearness of understanding was the very task of the supersensible School I spoke of last Monday.... [*Karmic Relationships*, vol. III, lecture VII.]

Let us now enter a little into the more intimate details of the teachings of that supersensible School. For these teachings led to a knowledge of something, of which only a kind of shadowy reflection has existed in the human views of the world since ancient Hebrew times

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and in the Christian era. It exists, to this day (when a far deeper insight already ought to prevail) among most people only as a dim reflection of old traditions. I speak of the teaching concerning sin or the sinful human being – the being who was not predestined to descend so deeply into the material realm as actually occurred.

We can still find a good version of this teaching in Saint Martin, the "unknown Philosopher." [Louis Claude de St. Martin, 1743-1803. Christian theosopher and philosopher. See also Rudolf Steiner, *Cosmic and Human Metamorphoses*, Lecture VII.]

Saint Martin taught his pupils that originally, before earthly human evolution began, humanity stood at a certain height, from which it then sank down through a primeval sin, which Saint Martin describes as "Cosmic Adultery." By this primeval sin, humanity descended to that estate in which it finds itself today.

Saint Martin points here to something that is inherent in the doctrine of sin throughout human history and evolution; namely, the idea humanity does not stand at the high level at which it *could* be standing. All teachings about inherited or original sin are connected with this idea that humanity has descended from a height that was originally its own.

Now, following this idea to its conclusion, a conception of the world of a very definite shade or coloring gradually evolved. This kind of world view said in effect: **"Human beings became sinful (and to become sinful means to fall from one's original height). And since they have in fact become sinful, they cannot see the world as they would have been able to see it in their sinless condition before the Fall.** Thus they see the world darkly and dimly. **They do not see it in its true form, but with many illusions and false fantasies. Above all, they do not see what they see in outer nature as it really is or with its true spiritual background. They see it in a material form which is not there in reality."** Such was the meaning of the saying: Humanity is sinful. Such was its meaning in ancient times and is so still – in the traditions – often even to this day. Therefore upon earth too (and not only in the supersensible School), those who had kept the traditions of the Mysteries continued to teach that human beings cannot perceive the world, nor feel and act in it, as they would think and feel and act if they had not become sinful – if they had not descended from the height for which their Gods originally predestined them.

With this in mind, let us now turn our gaze to all the leading Spirits in the kingdom of the *Archangeloi* who follow one another in their rulerships, so that earthly dominion is exercised in turn through successive periods of 300-350 years. In the last three or four centuries it has been the dominion of Gabriel. Now it will be that of Michael, for 300 years to come. Let us therefore turn our gaze to the whole series of these Archangelic Beings: Gabriel, Raphael, Zachariel, Anael, Oraphiel, Samael, Michael. As we look to these Beings, we may characterize the relation that exists between them and the loftier Spirits of the Hierarchies somewhat as follows.

I beg you not to take these words too lightly or too easily. We have but human words to express these sublime realities. Simple as the words may sound, they are not meant lightly. Of all these Angels, the number of whom is seven, six have, to a very considerable extent, though not entirely – Gabriel most of all; but even Gabriel not completely – six, as I say, have to a very considerable extent resigned themselves to the fact that human beings face Maya, the great Illusion, because their quality no longer accords with their original predestination, because in fact they have descended from their original stature. Michael alone, Michael is the only one (again, I am forced to use banal expressions), Michael is the only one who would not give in. Michael, and with him even those who are the Michaelic spirits even among human beings, continues to take this stand: I am the ruler of the Intelligence. And the Intelligence must be so ruled that there shall not, enter into it any illusion or false fantasy, nor anything that would restrict the human being to a dark, vague, cloudy vision of the world.

My dear friends: to see how Michael stands there as the greatest opponent in the ranks of the Archangels is an unspeakably uplifting sight – overpowering, magnificent. And each time a Michael Age returned, it happened upon earth not only that (as I have already said) intelligence as a means of knowledge became cosmopolitan, but also that intelligence

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became such that human beings were filled through and through with the consciousness: "After all, we *can* ascend to the Divinity."

This consciousness: "We can, after all, ascend to the Divine," played an immense part at the end of the last Michael Age, the Michael Age before our own. Starting in ancient Greece, the ancient Mystery places were everywhere in a state of discouragement; an atmosphere of discouragement came over them all. Discouraged, too, were those who lived on in Southern Italy and Sicily. The successors of the ancient Pythagorean School of the sixth century before Christ had been well-nigh extinguished. They were filled with discouragement. They saw how much materialistic illusion was spreading over the whole world.

Discouraged, too, were those who were the daughters and sons of ancient Egyptian Mysteries. Oh, these Egyptian Mysteries! When these Mysteries still handed down the deep old teachings, such as were expressed in the legend of Osiris or in the worship of Serapis, this was only like the slag from wonderful old veins of precious metal. And over in Asia, where were those mighty and courageous ascents to the spiritual world that had begun, for example, in the Mysteries of Artemis (Diana) at Ephesus? Even the Samothracian Mysteries, the wisdom of the Kabiri, could now be deciphered only by those who bore deep within them the impulse of greatness to soar upward with might and main. By such souls alone could the clouds of smoke that ascended from Axieros, etc., from the Kabiri, be deciphered. [See Rudolf Steiner, *Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centers*.]

Discouragement everywhere! Everywhere there was a feeling of what they sought to overcome in the ancient Mysteries when they turned to the secret of the Sun mystery – which is in truth the secret of Michael. Everywhere a feeling: Humanity cannot, it is unable.

This Michael Age was an age of great trial and probation. Plato, after all, was but a kind of watery extract of the ancient Mysteries. The most intellectual element of this extract was then extracted again in Aristotelianism, and Alexander took it on his shoulders.

This was the word of Michael at that time: Humanity must reach the Pan-Intelligence, human beings must take hold of the Divine upon earth in sinless form. Radiating from the center of Alexandria, the best that has been achieved must be spread far and wide in all directions, through all the places of the Mysteries, discouraged as they are. This was the impulse of Michael. This is indeed the relation of Michael to the other *Archangeloi*. Michael has protested most strongly against the Fall.

This, too, was the most important content of his teaching, the teaching with which he instructed his own pupils in the supersensible School of which I have spoken. **This teaching was as follows: Now that the Intelligence will be down among human beings on the earth, having fallen from the lap of Michael and from his hosts – now, in this new Age of Michael, human beings will have to become aware of the way of their salvation. They must not allow their Intelligence to be overcome by sinfulness; rather, they must use this age of Intelligence to ascend to the spiritual life in purity of Intelligence, free of all illusion.**

Such is the mood and feeling on the side of Michael as against the side of Ahriman. I have characterized this great contrast. The very strongest efforts are already being made by Ahriman – and more still will be made in the future – to acquire the Intelligence that has come into human hands. **For if human beings once became possessed by Ahriman, Ahriman himself, in human heads, would possess the Intelligence intended for humanity.**

My dear friends, we must learn to know this Ahriman, these hosts of Ahriman. It is not enough to find the name of Ahriman contemptible or to give the name of Ahriman to so many beings whom one despises. That is of no avail. **The point is that in Ahriman a cosmic Being of the highest imaginable Intelligence stands before us, a cosmic Being who has already taken the Intelligence entirely into the individual, personal element.** In every conceivable direction **Ahriman is in the highest degree intelligent, over-intelligent.** He has at his command a dazzling Intelligence, proceeding from the whole human being, with the single exception of the part of the human being which in the human forehead takes on a human form.

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To reproduce Ahriman in human imagination we should have to give him a receding forehead, a frivolously cynical expression, for in him everything comes out of the lower forces, and yet from these lower forces the highest Intelligence proceeds. If ever we let ourselves in for a discussion with Ahriman, we would inevitably be shattered by the logical conclusiveness, the magnificent certainty of aim with which he manipulates his arguments. The really decisive question for the human world, in Ahriman's opinion, is this: **Will cleverness or stupidity prevail?** And Ahriman calls stupidity everything that does not contain Intelligence within it in full personal individuality. **Every Ahriman-being is over-endowed with personal Intelligence** in the way I have now described; **critical to a degree in the repudiation of all things unlogical; scornful and contemptuous in thought.**

When we have Ahriman before us in this way, then too we shall feel the great contrast between Ahriman and Michael. For Michael is not in the least concerned with the personal quality of Intelligence. It is only for humanity that the temptation is ever-present to make Intelligence personal after the patten of Ahriman. Truth to tell, Ahriman has a most contemptuous judgment of Michael. He thinks Michael foolish and stupid – stupid, needless to say, in relation to himself. For Michael does not wish to seize the Intelligence and make it personally his own. Michael only wills, and *has* willed through the thousands of years, nay through the aeons, to administer the Pan-Intelligence. And now once more, now that human beings have the Intelligence, it should once again be administered by Michael as something belonging to all humankind – as the common and universal Intelligence that benefits all human beings alike.

We human beings shall indeed do rightly, my dear friends, if we say to ourselves: the idea that we can have cleverness only for ourselves is foolish. We cannot be clever only for ourselves. For if we want to prove anything logically to another person, the first thing we must presume is that the same logic holds good for him or her as for ourselves. And for a third party again it is the same logic. If anyone were able to have a personal logic it would be absurd for us to want to prove anything to that person by *our* logic. This after all is easy to realize; but it is essential in the present age of Michael that this realization also enters our deepest feelings.

Thus behind the scenes of existence is raging the battle of Michael against all that is of Ahriman. And this, as I have said, is among the tasks of the anthroposophists. They must have a feeling for the fact that these things are so at the present time. They must feel that the Cosmos is, as it were, in the very midst of this battle.

You see, this battle was already there in the Cosmos, but it became significant above all since the eighth or ninth century, when the Cosmic Intelligence gradually fell away from Michael and his hosts and came down to humanity on earth. It became acute only when the Spiritual or Consciousness Soul began to unfold in humanity at the beginning of the fifteenth century. In individual Spirits living on earth at that time, we see, even upon earth, some sort of reflection of what was taking place in the great supersensible School of which I spoke last Monday. We see something of it reflected in individual human beings on the earth.

In recent lectures, we have spoken much of heavenly reflections in earthly schools and institutions. We have spoke of the great School of Chartres, and others. But we can speak of this in relation to individual human beings too. Thus, at the very time when the Consciousness Soul began to evolve in civilized humanity – when Rosicrucianism, genuine Rosicrucianism, was nurturing the early beginnings of the impulse to the Consciousness Soul – something of the impulse which was at work above the earth struck down like lightning upon a spirit living in that age. I mean Raimund of Sabunda. [Raimund de Sabunda (d.1436) Spanish theologian. Remembered for his *Theologie naturalis*, translated into French by Montaigne.] What he taught at the beginning of the fifteenth century is almost like an earthly reflection of the great supersensible doctrine of Michael which I have characterized.

Raymond of Sabunda said: Human beings have fallen from the vantage-point that was originally given to them by their Gods. If they had remained at that point, they would have seen around them all that lives in the wondrous crystal shapes of the mineral kingdom, in the amorphous mineral kingdom, in the hundred-and-thousand fold forms of the plant kingdom,

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in the forms of the animal, all that lives and moves in water and air, in warmth and in the earthly realm. All this they would have seen as it really is, in its true nature.

Raymond de Sabunda called to mind how the Tree of Sephiroth and the Aristotelian categories [On categories, see, among others, Rudolf Steiner, *The Easter Festival in the Evolution of the Mysteries*, lecture IV.] (those generalized concepts that look so strange to one who cannot understand them) contain what is meant to guide us through Intelligence, up into the universe. How dry, how appallingly dry do these categories seem when they are taught in the textbooks of Logic. Being, having, becoming, here, there – ten such categories, ten abstract concepts, and people say: it is too dreadful, it is appalling to have to learn such abstractions. Why should anyone grow warm with enthusiasm for ten generalized concepts such as being, having, becoming and so forth?

But it is just as though someone were to say: here is Goethe's *Faust*. Why do people make so much fuss of it? It only consists of letters. Nothing else is in the book, only letters in various combinations and permutations. Certainly someone who cannot read, and takes Goethe's *Faust* in hand, will not perceive the greatness contained in it. He or she will see only A, B, C, D... to Z. A person who does not know how the letters are to be combined, who does not know how they are related to one another, cannot read Goethe's *Faust*.

So it is, too, with the Aristotelian categories. There are ten of them, not so many as the letters of the alphabet, but they are indeed the spiritual letters. And anyone who knows how to manipulate "being," "having," "becoming," etc., in the right way – just as we must know how to read the several letters so that they produce Goethe's *Faust* – anyone who knows how to do this, may still be able to divine what Aristotle for example said of these things in his instructions to Alexander.

Raymond of Sabunda was one who still drew attention to such things. He had knowledge of them. He said: Look, for instance, at what is still contained in Aristotelianism. There we find something that has still remained of that old standpoint from which humanity fell at the beginning of human evolution on earth. Originally, human beings still preserved some memory of it. It was the *reading in the Book of Nature*. But human beings have fallen; they call no longer truly read in the Book of Nature. Hence God, in His compassion, has given them the Bible, the Book of Revelation, in order that they may not, entirely depart from what is Divine and Spiritual. Thus Raymond of Sabunda still taught, even in the fifteenth century, that the Book of Revelation exists for sinful humanity because it is no longer able to read in the Book of Nature. And in the way he taught these things, we can already perceive his idea that **human beings must once again find the power to read in the great Book of Nature.**

This is the impulse of Michael. Now that the Intelligence, administered by him has come down to human beings, it is Michael's impulse to lead human beings to the point where they will read once more in the Book of Nature. The great Book of Nature will be opened again. Human beings will read in the Book of Nature again.

In reality, all those who are in the Anthroposophical Movement should feel that they can only understand their karma when they know that they personally are called to read again, spiritually, in the Book of Nature – to find the spiritual background of Nature, God having given His Revelation for the intervening time ...

SEVEN

Michael, Sophia and Maruk

(From: R. Steiner, *True and False paths in Spiritual Investigation*, pp. 33-37.)

Torquay, August 11, 1924

... In ancient Chaldea, the following was taught: human soul-forces reach their maximum potentiality when human beings direct their spiritual eye to the wonderful contrast between the life of sleep (when their consciousness is dimmed and they are oblivious of their environment) and the waking life (when they are clear-sightedly, and aware of the world around them). These alternating states of sleep and waking were experienced differently thousands of years ago than they are today. Sleep was less unconscious, waking life not so fully conscious. In sleep, human beings were aware of powerful, ever-changing images, of the flux and movement of the life of worlds. They were in touch with the divine Ground, the essence, of the universe.

The dimming of consciousness during sleep is a consequence of human evolution. A few thousand years ago, waking life was not so clear and lucid as today. Objects had no clearly defined contours; they were blurred. They radiated spiritual realities in various forms. There was not the same abrupt transition from sleep to waking life. The people of that epoch were still able to distinguish these two states. The environment of their waking life was called *Apsu*; while the life of flux and movement experienced in sleep, the realm that blurred the clear distinction between the minerals, plants and animals of waking life, was called *Tiamat*. [For the whole story, see Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*.] Now, the teaching in the Chaldean Mystery Schools was that when human beings, in a state of sleep, shared the flux and movement of *Tiamat*, they were closer to truth and reality than when they lived their conscious life among minerals, plants and animals. *Tiamat* was nearer to the Ground of the world, more closely related to the human world than *Apsu*. *Apsu* was more remote. *Tiamat* represented something that lay nearer to humanity. But in the course of time *Tiamat* underwent changes and this was brought to the notice of the neophytes in the Mystery Schools. From the life of flux and movement of *Tiamat*, demoniacal forms emerged, equine shapes with human heads, leonine forms with the heads of angels. These demoniacal forms that became hostile to human beings arose out of the warp and woof of *Tiamat*.

Then there appeared in the world a powerful Being, *Ea*. Anyone today who has an ear for sounds can feel how the conjunction of these two vowels (E and A) points to that powerful Being who, according to these old Mystery teachings, stood at a person's side to help when the demons of *Tiamat* grew strong. *Ea* or *Ia*, later became – if one anticipates the prefix "Soph" – "Soph-Ea," Sophia. *Ea* means, approximately, abstract wisdom, wisdom that permeates all things. "Soph" is a particle that suggests (approximately) a state of being. Sophia, Sophea, Sopheia, the all-pervading, omnipresent wisdom sent to humanity her son, then known as *Marduk*, later called "Micha-el," the Micha-el who is invested with authority front the hierarchy of the Angels. He is the same Being as *Marduk*, the son of *Ea*, wisdom: Marduk–Micha-el.

According to the Mystery teachings, *Marduk–Micha-el* was great and powerful and all the demoniacal beings such as horses with human heads and leonine forms with angels' heads – all these surging, mobile, demoniacal forms, conjoined as the mighty *Tiamat*, were arrayed against him. *Marduk–Micha-el* was powerful enough to command the storm wind that sweeps through the world. All that *Tiamat* embodied was seen as a living reality, and rightly so, for that is how the Chaldeans experienced it. All these demons together were envisaged as the adversary – a powerful Dragon embodying all the demoniacal powers born of *Tiamat*, the night. And this Dragon-Being, breathing fire and fury, advanced upon *Marduk*. *Marduk–Micha-el* first smote it with various weapons and then drove the whole force of his storm-

wind into the Dragon's entrails, so that *Tiamat* burst asunder and was scattered abroad. [The text says: "The North Wind bore (it) to places undisclosed."] And so *Marduk-Micha-el* was able to create out of the Dragon the heavens above and the earth beneath. And thus arose the Above and the Below.

Such was the teaching of the Mysteries. The eldest son of *Ea*, wisdom, vanquished *Tiamat* and fashioned from one part of *Tiamat* the heavens above and from the other the earth below. And if, O human being, you lift your eyes to the stars, you will see one part of that which *Marduk-Micha-el* formed in the heavens out of the fearful abyss of *Tiamat* for the benefit of humankind. And if you look below, where the plants grow out of the mineralized earth, where minerals begin to take form, you will find the other part which the son of *Ea*, wisdom, has recreated for the benefit of humankind.

Thus the ancient Chaldeans looked back to the formative period of the world, to the forming from the formless; they saw into the workshop of creation and perceived a living reality. These demon forms of the night, all these nocturnal monsters, the weaving, surging beings of *Tiamat* had been transformed by *Marduk-Micha-el* into the stars above and the earth beneath. All the demons transformed by *Marduk-Micha-el* into shining stars, all that grows out of the earth, the transformed skin and tissue of *Tiamat* – this is the form in which people of ancient times pictured whatever came to them through the old attributes of the soul. Such information they accounted as knowledge....

EIGHT

Michael, Arthur and the Grail

(From: Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships (Esoteric Studies)*,
vol. VIII, pp. 31-45.)

Torquay, August 21, 1924

... The lectures here have made it clear that in our own epoch the Impulse of the Being known in Christian terminology as the Archangel Michael is responsible for the spiritual guidance of civilization. This Michael rulership – if we may call it so – of spiritual life began in the 1870s and was preceded, as I have said, by that of Gabriel. I shall now say something about certain aspects of Michael's present rulership.

Whenever Michael sends his impulses into human earthly evolution, he is the bringer of Sun-Forces, the spiritual forces of the Sun. This is connected with the fact that during waking consciousness human beings receive these Sun-Forces into their physical and etheric bodies.

The present Michael rulership – which began not very long ago and will last from three to four centuries – means that the cosmic forces of the Sun penetrate right into human physical and etheric bodies. Here we must ask: What kind of forces, what kind of impulses, are these cosmic Sun-Forces?

Michael is essentially a Sun-Spirit. He is therefore the Spirit whose task in our epoch is to bring about a deeper, more esoteric understanding of the truths of Christianity.

Christ came from the Sun. Christ, the Sun-Being, dwelt, on the earth in the body of Jesus and has lived since then in supersensible communion with the world of human beings. But before the whole Mystery connected with Christ can reveal itself to the soul, humanity must become sufficiently mature. This necessary deepening will to a great extent **has to be achieved during the present Michael Age.**

Now, whenever Sun-Forces work in upon the earth, they are always connected with an impulse that streams into earthly civilization as an in-pouring wave of intellectuality, for in our

sphere of existence everything human beings and the world in general possess in the way of intellectuality or intelligence derives from the Sun. **The Sun is the source of intellectual life that operates in the service of the Spirit.**

Utterance of this truth may evoke a certain inner resistance today, for people rightly do not place too high a value upon the intellect in its present form. Those who have any real understanding of spiritual life will not set much store by the intellectuality prevailing in the modern age. It is abstract and formal, crowding the human mind with ideas and concepts that are utterly remote from living reality. Compared with the warm, radiant life pulsing through the world and humanity, it, is cold, dry, and barren.

With respect to intelligence, however, this holds good only for the present time, since we are living in a very early period of the Michael Age and what we now possess as intelligence is only just beginning to unfold in general human consciousness. In time, this intelligence will have an altogether different character. In order to realize how the nature of intelligence changes during the course of human evolution, let us recall that in medieval Christian philosophy Thomas Aquinas still spoke of Beings, of "Intelligences" inhabiting the stars. In contrast to the materialistic views prevailing today, we ourselves also regard the stars as colonies of spiritual Beings. This seems strange and far-fetched to the ears of modern human beings who have not the remotest inkling that when they gaze at the stars they are gazing at Beings related in certain ways with their own lives and inhabiting the stars just as we ourselves inhabit the earth.

In the thirteenth century, when Thomas Aquinas spoke of Beings in the stars he assigned to each star a single Being in the sense that earthly humanity would be regarded as a single unit if the earth were to be observed from some distant heavenly body. We ourselves know that the stars are to be conceived as colonies of Beings in the cosmos. Thomas Aquinas did not speak of specific Beings or numbers of Beings inhabiting the stars, but when he referred to the "Intelligences" of the stars this authority of medieval Christian doctrine was continuing a tradition which at that time was already dying away. This is an indication that what is comprised today in the term "Intelligence" was once something altogether different.

In very ancient times human beings did not produce their thoughts from out of themselves; when they thought about the things of the world their thoughts were not the product of their own inner activity. The faculty of thinking, one's own activity in the forming of thoughts, has only fully unfolded since the fifteenth century, since the entry of the Consciousness Soul into the evolution of humanity. In older, pre-Christian times it would never have occurred to people to believe that they were producing their own thoughts out of themselves; they did not feel that they themselves were forming their thoughts, but rather that thoughts were revealed to them from the things of the world. They felt: Intelligence is universal, cosmic; it is contained in the things of the world; the intelligence-content, the thought-content of things is perceived, just as colors are perceived; the world is full of Intelligence, pervaded everywhere by Intelligence. In the course of evolution, humanity has acquired a drop of the Intelligence that is spread over the wide universe. Such was the conception in ancient times.

And so human beings were conscious all the time that their thoughts were revealed to them, were inspired into them. That is, people ascribed Intelligence only to the universe, not to themselves.

Throughout the ages, the Regent of Cosmic Intelligence, which streams like light over the whole world, has been the Spirit known by the name of *Michael*. Michael is the Ruler of Cosmic Intelligence. But after the Mystery of Golgotha something of deep significance took place in that Michael's dominion over Cosmic Intelligence gradually fell away from him. Since the earth began, Michael has administered Cosmic Intelligence. And in the time of Alexander and Aristotle when human beings were aware of thoughts – that is to say, of the content of Intelligence within them – they did not regard these thoughts as their own, self-made thought: they felt that, the thoughts were revealed to them through the power of Michael, although in that pagan era this Michael Being was known by a different name. This thought-content then gradually fell away from Michael. And if we look into the spiritual world we see that, by about the eighth century A.D., the descent of the Intelligence from the Sun to

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the earth had been accomplished. In the ninth century, people were already beginning, as forerunners of those who would come later, to unfold their own, personal intelligence. Intelligence began to take root within the souls of individual human beings. And so, looking down from the Sun to the earth, Michael and his hosts could say: What we have administered through aeons of time has fallen away from us, has streamed downward and may now be found in human souls on earth.

Such was the mood and feeling prevailing in the Michael-Community on the Sun. During the age of Alexander and for a few centuries before, Michael exercised his previous earthly dominion. By the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, however, Michael and his own were in the sphere of the Sun and from there they witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun; they did not, as those who were below, witness Christ's arrival on earth. Michael and his hosts witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun and at the same time they saw that their dominion over the Intelligence was gradually falling from their grasp.

Following the Mystery of Golgotha, therefore, the course of development is as follows. Christ came to earth and lived in union with it. Until the eighth or ninth century, the Intelligence gradually sank down to earth; and people began to ascribe what they called knowledge – what they unfolded in their thoughts – to their own, personal intelligence. Michael saw that what he had administered for aeons was now to be found in human souls. And so the Michael-Community realized: "During our next rulership – which will begin in the last third of the nineteenth century – when our impulses will pour once again through earthly civilization, we shall have to seek out on the earth the Intelligence that descended from the heavens, in order that we may once again administer – but now in human hearts and souls – what for aeons we administered from the Sun." In this way the Michael-Community prepared itself to find in human hearts what had fallen from its grasp and under the influence of the Mystery of Golgotha had also taken the path, although more gradually, from the heavens to the earth.

I will now indicate briefly how Michael and his hosts have striven in order that, beginning with this present Michael Age, they may once again take hold of the Intelligence that fell away from them in the heavens. From now on Michael, who has been striving from the Sun for those on earth who perceive the Spiritual in the cosmos, wishes to establish his citadel in the hearts and in the souls of earthly human beings. This is to begin in our present time. Christianity is to be guided into a realm of deeper truths, inasmuch as understanding of the Christ as a Sun Being is to arise within humanity with the help of Michael, the Sun Spirit, who has always ruled over the Intelligence, and who can now no longer administer it in the cosmos, but desires in future to administer it in and through the hearts of human beings.

In seeking to discover the origin and source of Intelligence in whatever form it may be revealed, people look today to the human head because, having descended from the heavens to the earth, the Intelligence weaves within the soul and manifests inwardly through the head. This was not always the case in times when human beings strove for Intelligence or the essence of the Intelligence as it revealed itself from the Cosmos. In earlier epochs people strove for Intelligence *not* by developing the faculties of the head, but by seeking for the Inspirations conveyed to them by cosmic forces.

An example of how in earlier times humanity sought cosmic Intelligence in a way in which it is no longer sought today, is to be found when one stands, as we were able to do last Sunday, at that place in Tintagel which was once the site of King Arthur's Castle and where Arthur and his twelve companions exercised a power of far-reaching significance for Europe.

From the accounts contained in historical documents it will not be easy to form a true conception of the tasks and the mission of King Arthur and his Round Table, as it is called. This becomes possible, however, when one stands on the actual site of the castle and gazes with the eye of the spirit over the stretch of sea which an intervening cliff seems to divide into two. There, in a comparatively short time, one can perceive a wonderful interplay between the light and the air, and also between the elemental spirits living in light and air. One can see spirit-beings streaming to the earth in the rays of the sun, one can see them mirrored in the glittering raindrops, one can see what comes under the sway of earthly gravity appearing in the air as the denser spirit-beings of the air. Again, when the rain stops and the rays of the

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sun stream through the clear air, one perceives the elemental spirits intermingling in quite a different way. There one witnesses how the Sun works in earthly substance, and seeing it all from a place such as this, one is filled with a kind of pagan "piety" – not Christian but pagan piety, which is something altogether different. Pagan piety is a surrender of heart and feeling to the manifold spirit-beings working in the processes of nature.

Amid the conditions of modern social life it is not, generally speaking, possible for people to give effect to the processes coming to expression in the play of nature-forces. These things can be penetrated only by Initiation-Knowledge. But you must understand that every spiritual attainment is dependent upon some essential and fundamental condition.

In the example I gave this morning to illustrate how the knowledge of material phenomena must be furthered and extended, I spoke of the interweaving, self-harmonizing karma of two human beings as a necessary factor. [See Steiner, *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*, lecture X.] And in the days of King Arthur and those around him, special conditions were required in order that the spirituality so wondrously revealed and borne in by the sea might flow into their mission and their tasks.

This interplay between the sunlit air and the rippling, foam-crested waves continues to this day. Over the sea and the rocky cliffs at this place, nature is still quick with spirit. But to take hold of the spirit-forces working in nature would have been beyond the power of one individual alone. A group was necessary, one of whom felt himself to be the representative of the Sun, at the center, and whose twelve companions were trained in such a way that in temperament, disposition and manner of acting, all of them together formed a twelfefold whole: twelve individuals grouped as the Zodiacal constellations are grouped around the Sun. Such was the Round Table: King Arthur at the center, surrounded by the Twelve, above each of whom a Zodiacal symbol was displayed, indicating the particular cosmic influence with which he was associated. Civilizing forces went out from this place to Europe. It was here that King Arthur and his Twelve Knights drew into themselves from the Sun the strength to set forth on their mighty expeditions through Europe to do battle with the wild, demonic powers still dominating large masses of the population, and drive them out of human beings. Under the guidance of King Arthur, these Twelve were battling for outer civilization.

To understand what the Twelve felt about themselves and their mission, it must be remembered that in ancient times people did not claim a personal intelligence of their own. They did not say: I form my thoughts, my thoughts that are filled with Intelligence, myself. People experienced Intelligence as *revealed* Intelligence, and they sought for revelations by forming themselves into a group like the one I have described – a group of twelve or thirteen. There they imbibed the Intelligence which enabled them to give direction and definition to the impulses needed for civilization. And this group also felt that they performed their deeds in the service of the Power known in Christian-Hebraic terminology as Michael. The whole configuration of the castle at Tintagel indicates that the Twelve under the direction of King Arthur were essentially a Michael-Community, belonging to the age when Michael still administered the Cosmic Intelligence.

This was actually the community that worked longer than any other to ensure that Michael should retain his dominion over the Cosmic Intelligence. At the ruins of King Arthur's Castle today, the Akasha Chronicle still preserves the picture of the stones falling from those once mighty gates, and these falling stones become an image of the Cosmic Intelligence falling, sinking away from the hands of Michael into the minds and hearts of human beings.

Elsewhere, this Arthur-Michael stream has its polaric contrast in the Grail stream of which the Parsifal Legend tells. [See Rudolf Steiner, *Christ and the Spiritual Word. The Search for the Holy Grail.*] This other stream comes into being in a place where a more inward form of Christianity had taken refuge. In the Grail stream, too, we have the Twelve around the One, but account is everywhere taken of the fact that the Intelligence – Intelligence-Filled Thoughts – no longer flows as revelation from the heavens to the earth. What now streams downward seems, when compared to earthly thoughts, like the "pure fool," Parsifal. Thus the Grail Stream realizes that Intelligence must now be sought within the earthly sphere alone.

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There, in the North, stands King Arthur's Castle, where human beings still turn to the Cosmic Intelligence, striving to instill the Intelligence belonging to the universe into earthly civilization. And further to the South stands that other castle, the Grail Castle, where Intelligence is no longer drawn from the heavens and where it is realized that what is wisdom before humanity is foolishness before God and what is wisdom before God is foolishness before human beings. [Cf. I Corinthians 1:18-29.] The impulse proceeding from this other Castle in the South strives to penetrate the Intelligence that is no longer the *Cosmic Intelligence*.

And so, in ancient times and continuing into the age when the Mystery of Golgotha took place in Asia, we find in the Arthur stream the intense striving to ensure Michael's dominion over the Intelligence, while in the Grail stream, which emerged from Spain, we find the striving in which account is taken of the fact that the Intelligence must in future be found on earth, since it no longer flows down from the heavens. The import of what I have just described to you breathes through the whole legend of the Grail.

Study of these two streams brings to light the great problem arising from the historical situation of that time. Human beings are confronted with the consequences – the after-effects – of both the Arthur-Principle and the Grail-Principle. The problem is: How does Michael himself, not a human being like Parsifal, but Michael himself, find the path leading from his Arthurian knights who strive to ensure his cosmic sovereignty, to his Grail knights who strive to prepare the way for him into the hearts and minds of human beings in order that therein he may again take hold of the Intelligence? Here the great problem of our own age takes definition: How can Michael's rulership bring about a deeper understanding of Christianity? Overwhelmingly this problem confronts us, marked by the contrast of the two castles: the one of which the ruins are to be seen to this day at Tintagel, and that other castle which will not easily be seen by human eyes, since in the spiritual realm it is surrounded, as it were, by a trackless forest, sixty leagues deep on every side. Between these two castles looms the great question: How can Michael become the giver of the impulse that will lead to a deeper understanding of the truths of Christianity?

Now it would not be correct to say that the Knights of King Arthur were not battling for Christ and the true Christ Impulse. It was simply that they bore within them the urge to seek for Christ *in the Sun* and would not abandon their conviction that the Sun is the fount of Christianity. Hence their feeling that they were bringing the heavens down to earth, that their Michael-battles were being waged for the Christ Who works from the rays of the Sun. But within the Grail stream, the Christ-Impulse is expressed in a different way. There people are conscious that the Christ-Impulse, having come down to the earth, must henceforth be made effective through human hearts. For they were convinced that the spiritual Essence of the Sun was now united with earthly evolution.

I have spoken in these lectures [See Rudolf Steiner, *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*, lecture 4] of individuals who in the twelfth century taught and worked in the School of Chartres, where teachings still inspired by a lofty and sublime spirituality were given forth. I spoke of particular teachers in the School of Chartres, among them Bernardus Sylvestris, Bernard of Chartres, Alanus ab Insulis – and there were others, too, surrounded by a great company of pupils. Remembering what was especially characteristic of these teachers of Chartres, we may say: In some measure they still preserved within them the old traditions of nature teeming with life and being as opposed to an abstract, material nature. And this was why there still hovered over the School of Chartres elements of that Sun-Christianity that the heroes of Arthur's Round Table, as Knights of Michael, had striven to implant as an impulse in the world.

In a remarkable way the School of Chartres stands midway between the Arthur-Principle in the North and the Grail-Principle in the South. And like shadows cast by the castle of King Arthur and the castle of the Grail, the supersensible, invisible impulses made their way, not so much into the actual content of the teachings, as into the whole attitude and mood-of-soul of the pupils who gathered with glowing enthusiasm in the "lecture halls" – as we would call them today – of Chartres. These were times when in the Christianity presented by these

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teachers of Chartres, Christ was conceived as the sublime Sun-Spirit Who had appeared in Jesus of Nazareth. So that when these teachers spoke of the Christ they saw His Impulse at work in earthly evolution in the terms of the idea of the Grail and at the same time they also saw in Him the downpouring Impulse of the Sun.

What is revealed to spiritual observation as the essence and keynote of the teachings given at Chartres cannot be discovered from surviving literary texts attributable to individual teachers in the School of Chartres. To a modern student, such writings seem scarcely more than glossaries of names. But in the brief sentences interspersed between the countless designations, names, definitions, those who read with spiritual penetration will discern the deep spirituality, the profound insight still possessed by these teachers of Chartres.

Toward the end of the twelfth century, these teachers passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world. And there they came together with that other stream, which was also linked with the Michael Age of ancient time, but in which full account was taken of the central truth of Christianity – namely that the Christ Impulse had come down from the heavens to the earth. In the spiritual world, the teachers of Chartres came into contact with all that the older Aristotelians had been able to achieve in preparation for Christianity as a result of Alexander's expeditions to Asia. But they also came together with Aristotle and Alexander themselves – who were then in the spiritual world. The impulse of which these two individualities were the bearers could not take effect on the earth at that time because it depended upon abandoning the old, nature-inspired Christianity that was still reflected in the teachings of Chartres in which, as in Arthur's Round Table, a pagan, pre-Christian Christianity prevailed. In the days of Chartres it was not possible for the Aristotelians – for those who had established and promoted Alexandrianism – to be on the earth. Their time, beginning with the thirteenth century, came a little later.

In the intervening period something of great significance took place. When the teachers of Chartres and those who were associated with them passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world, they came together with souls who were preparing to descend to the physical world and who were eventually led by their karma to the Order which, above all, was connected with the cultivation of knowledge in the Aristotelian form – the Dominicans. The representatives of Chartres came together with these other souls who were preparing to descend.

Using trivial words of modern speech, I will now describe what then transpired. At the turning-point of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries – at the beginning of the thirteenth century – a kind of conference took place between the souls who had just arrived in the spiritual world and the souls who were about to descend. And the momentous agreement was reached, that Sun-Christianity as expressed, for example, in the Grail-Principle and also in the teachings of Chartres, should now be united with Aristotelianism. Those who descended to earth became the founders of Scholasticism, the spiritual significance of which has never been truly assessed and in which, to begin with, people could hope to win the day for their view of personal immortality in the Christian sense only by advocating it in the most radical, extreme way. The teachers of Chartres had laid less emphasis upon this principle of the personal human immortality. They still inclined to the view that having passed through the gate of death the soul returns to the bosom of the Divine. They spoke far less of personal, individual immortality than did the Dominican Scholastics.

Many significant happenings were connected with what was here taking place. For example: When one of the Scholastics had come down from the spiritual world to work for the spread of Christianity in an Aristotelian form, he had not, to begin with, been able fully to grasp the essential import of the Grail-Principle. Karma had willed it so. And here lies the reason for the comparatively late appearance of Wolfram von Eschenbach's version of the Grail story. [Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*.] Another soul, who came down to the earth somewhat later than the first, brought with him the impulse that was necessary, and within the Dominican Order deliberations took place between an older and a younger Dominican as to how Aristotelianism might be united with the Christianity which, inspired more by nature and the workings of nature, had prevailed in King Arthur's Round Table.

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Then the time came for those individualities who had been teachers in the Dominican Order also to return to the spiritual world. And now the great agreement was reached under the leadership of Michael himself who, looking down to the Intelligence that was now on the earth, gathered around him his own – spiritual Beings belonging to the supersensible worlds, a great host of elemental spirits, and many, many discarnate human souls who were longing for a renewal of Christianity. It was too early, yet, for this to take effect in the physical world. But a great and mighty supersensible School was instituted under the leadership of Michael, embracing all those souls in whom the impulses of paganism still echoed on, but who were nevertheless longing for Christianity, and those souls who had already lived on the earth during the early centuries of Christendom and who bore Christianity within them in the form it had then assumed. A Michael host gathered together in supersensible realms receiving in the spiritual world the teachings which had been imparted by the Michael Teachers in the time of Alexander, in the time of the Grail tradition, and which had also taken effect in impulses like that going out from Arthur's Round Table.

Christian souls of every type and quality felt drawn to this Michael-Community where, on the one side, deeply significant teaching was imparted concerning the ancient Mysteries and the spiritual impulses at work in olden days, while, on the other, a vista was opened into the future when, in the last third of the nineteenth century, Michael would again be working on earth and when all the teachings given forth in this heavenly School under Michael's own leadership in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were to be carried down to earth.

If you seek the souls who gathered around this School of Michael at that time, preparing for the later period on earth, you will find among them many who now feel the urge to come to the Anthroposophical Movement. Karma guided these souls. In the life between death and a new birth, they thronged around Michael, preparing to carry down once more a cosmic Christianity to the earth.

The karma of many souls who have come into the Anthroposophical Movement, with real sincerity is connected with these preliminary conditions and antecedents. It is this that makes the Anthroposophical Movement into the true Michael Movement, the movement that is predestined to bring about the renewal of Christianity. This lies in the karma of the Anthroposophical Movement. It lies, too, in the karma of many individuals who have come with sincerity into that movement. To carry into the world the Michael-Impulse which may in this way be pictured in all its concrete reality, and which is betokened by many a sign on the earth today, and also comes strikingly to expression in the wonderful play of nature forces around the ruins of Arthur's Castle – this is the task of the Anthroposophical Movement, in a very special sense. For, in the Course of the centuries, the Michael-Impulse must find its way into the world of human beings if civilization is not to perish from the earth.

NINE

From Rudolf Steiner's Last Address

(From: Rudolf Steiner, *The Last Address*, pp. 17-19.)

Dornach, September 28, Michaelmas Eve, 1924

When we read the Fragments of Novalis, [Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), 1772-1801, German Romantic poet and philosopher. See also Rudolf Steiner, *The Christmas Mystery: Novalis as Seer*; also Sergei Prokofieff, *Eternal Individuality: Towards a Karmic Biography of Novalis*.] and give ourselves up to the life that flows so abundantly in them, we can discover the secret of the deep impression they make on us. Whatever we have before us in immediate sense-reality, whatever the eye can see and recognize as beautiful – all this, through the magic idealism that lives in the soul of Novalis, appears in his poetry with a well-nigh heavenly splendor.

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The meanest and simplest material thing – with the magic idealism of his poetry he can make it live again in all its spiritual light and glory.

And so we see in Novalis a radiant and splendid forerunner of that Michael Stream which is now to lead you all, my near friends, while you live; and then, after you have gone through the gate of death, you will find in the spiritual supersensible worlds all those others – among them also the being of whom I have been speaking to you today [Rudolf Steiner is referring here to St. John the Evangelist.] – and all those with whom you are to prepare the work that shall be accomplished at the end of the century, and that shall lead humankind past the great crisis in which it is involved.

This work is: to let the Michael Power and the Michael Will penetrate the whole of life. The Michael Power and the Michael Will are none other than the Christ Will and the Christ Power, going before in order to implant the Power of the Christ in the right way into the earth. If this Michael Power is able verily to overcome all that, is of the demon and the dragon (and you well know what that is), if you all, who have in this way received the Michael Thought in the light, have indeed received it with true and faithful heart and with tender love, and will endeavor to go forward from the Michael mood of this year, until not only is the Michael Thought *revealed* in your soul, but you are able also to make the Michael Thought *live* in your *deeds* in all its strength and all its power – if this is so, then will you be true servants of the Michael Thought, worthy helpers of what has now to enter earthly evolution through Anthroposophy, and take its place there in the meaning of Michael....

My strength is not sufficient for more today. May the words speak to your soul so that you receive the Michael Thought in the sense of what a faithful follower of Michael may feel when, clothed in the light rays of the Sun, Michael appears and points us to what must now take place. For it must even be so that this Michael garment, this garment of Light, shall become the Words of the Worlds, which are the Christ Words – the Words of the Worlds, which can transform the Logos of the Worlds into the Logos of Humankind. Therefore let my words to you today be these:

Sprung from solar powers,
shining, world-blessing powers of spirit:
divine thinking has predestined you
to be Michael's coat of rays.

He, the messenger of Christ, reveals in you,
who bear humanity, the holy will of worlds;
you, bright beings of the ether worlds,
bear Christ's word to humankind.

Thus the herald of Christ appears
to waiting, thirsting souls;
to them your word of light streams forth
in the world age of the spiritual body.

You, students and knowers of the spirit,
take Michael's wise sign,
practice taking into your soul's high purpose
the word of love of the will of worlds.

TEN

FROM: The Michael Letters

(From: Rudolf Steiner, *The Michael Mystery*, pp. 1-7 and 33-43.)

I.

At the Dawn of the Age of Michael

August 17, 1924

Human beings enjoyed a different relationship to their thoughts prior to the ninth century after the Mystery of Golgotha than they did later on. They did not feel the thoughts living in their souls were produced by them, but they regarded them rather as gifts given them by the spiritual world. Even such thoughts as they had about what they perceived with their senses seemed to them revelations of the Divine conveyed by objects in the sense world.

Anyone who can perceive the Spirit understands this feeling.

Those to whom a spiritual reality is manifested never feel that the spiritual percept is given and that they then form the concept to grasp it. Rather they actually see the thought contained in the percept. The thought is just as objectively present as is the percept itself.

During the ninth century – this is, of course, only an approximate time, to be understood as a median, for the transition took place gradually – individual personal intelligence began to illumine the souls of human beings. People got the feeling that they formed their thoughts. This thought-forming activity became the predominant feature of soul life, so that thinkers conceived of the human soul as expressing itself fundamentally in the application of intelligence. The previous conception of the soul had been an imaginative one. The soul's nature was seen as participating in the content of the spiritual world rather than as active thought-formation. Supersensible spiritual Beings were thought of as engaged in thinking and working on human beings, and sending their thoughts into them as well. This content of the supersensible spiritual world living in human beings was felt to be the soul.

We encounter concrete spiritual Beings immediately upon penetrating the spiritual realm with clairvoyant vision. In ancient teachings, the Being from whom the thoughts bound up with things flowing forth was called Michael. We can retain the name here. So it can be said that people once received the thoughts that came to them from Michael. Michael ruled over Cosmic Intelligence.

From the ninth century onward, human beings no longer felt that Michael was inspiring their thoughts. Thoughts had fallen away from his dominion; they had descended from the spiritual world into the individual souls of human beings.

From then on, humanity itself nurtured the life of thought. At first, uncertainty reigned as to what people were dealing with in the thoughts they had. Scholastic doctrine reflects this uncertainty. There were two categories of these philosophers: realists and nominalists.

The realists, led by Thomas Aquinas and his fellow thinkers, still sensed the ancient unity between thoughts and things. They saw in thought a reality living in the object; they conceived of a person's thoughts as realities that flowed out of things into the souls of those who perceived them.

The nominalists, on the other hand, were keenly aware that souls formed their own thoughts. They felt thoughts to be a purely subjective element that lived in the soul but had nothing to

do with things themselves. In their view, thoughts were mere names that people made tip for things. (They spoke not of "thoughts" but of "universals." However, this does not effect the principle they upheld, since thoughts always have a universal connotation in their relationship to things.)

We could say: The realists wanted to keep faith with Michael. Then, too, in view of the fact that thoughts had descended from Michael's realm into that of human beings, they wanted their thinking to serve him as the Lord of Cosmic Intelligence – The nominalists, however, on a subconscious soul level, carried the falling away from Michael to completion. They regarded the human being rather than Michael as the possessor of thoughts.

Nominalism gained ground and influence. This was the situation up to the last, third of the nineteenth century, a period during which individuals able to perceive spiritual events in the universe felt that Michael remained connected with the stream of intellectual life. Michael seeks a new metamorphosis of his cosmic task. In earlier times, Michael allowed thoughts to stream from the external spiritual world into human souls. But beginning with the last third of the nineteenth century, it is his desire to live in human souls as thoughts are formed there. In that earlier age, human beings who were related to Michael perceived him carrying on his activity in the realm of the spirit. Now they realize that they must allow him to live in their hearts. Now they wish their thought-nourished spiritual life to be dedicated to him. In their independent individual life of thought, they let Michael teach them the paths their souls should be following.

Individuals who, in their former earthly lives, were recipients of inspired thoughts – individuals, in other words, who served Michael – felt themselves drawn to voluntary participation in the Michael-Community upon re-entering earthly incarnation at the end of the nineteenth century. From then on, they regarded the old inspirer of their thinking as their guide in higher thought activity.

A person alert to such matters could perceive what a transformation occurred in human thought life during the last third of the nineteenth century. Prior to that time, people could feel only that thoughts were formed by their own activity. Beginning with the period cited, people can rise above themselves and project their awareness into spiritual realms. There they encounter Michael, who reveals himself as linked from olden times with all thought activity. **Michael frees thoughts from their restriction to the head region and opens a way for them to the heart. He sets inner enthusiasm glowing, enabling people to give themselves in soul devotion to everything that can be experienced in the light of thought.** The Michael Age has arrived. **Hearts are beginning to have thoughts. Enthusiasm is no longer generated by obscure mysticism, but by inner clarity supported by thoughts.** To grasp this is to receive Michael into one's inner being. Thoughts that aim at understanding matters of the spirit in our time must spring from hearts devoted to Michael as the fiery Cosmic Lord of Thought..

II.

The Human Soul State Prior to the Dawning of the Michael Age

August 31, 1924

The Age of Michael dawned in human evolution after a period in which, on the one hand, intellectual thought activity predominated, while, on the other, human beings focused their gaze on the external physical world of the senses.

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The forming of thoughts is *not* intrinsically a development in the direction of materialism. The world of Ideas, which made itself known to humanity in earlier times in the form of inspiration, became an individual soul possession in the period prior to the Michael Age. No longer did souls receive Ideas "from above" as the content, of the spiritual world. They now actively drew them forth from their own spirits. This step represents a maturing to the point where human beings became able to reflect on their own spiritual essence. Previously, they never penetrated to the depth of their own being. Rather, they regarded themselves as drops separated out of the sea of spiritual being for the period of their earthly lives, to return at its conclusion to that ocean.

The thought-forming activity taking place within human beings represents an advance in self-knowledge. From the supersensible point of view, matters stand as follows: the spiritual Powers to whom we may assign the name of Mikhael had dominion over Ideas in the spiritual universe. Human beings experienced these Ideas as they participated in the life of Michael's realm. Now they experience Ideas as their own, with the result that they have been separated for the time being from the Michaelic world. The inspired thoughts of earlier days also brought human beings the content of the spiritual world. But as inspiration ceased to flow and individuals began actively forming their own thoughts, human beings had to turn to sensory perception to find content for their thoughts. This meant temporarily filling with a material content the personal spirit to which they had attained. They fell into a materialistic way of looking at things in the epoch that brought their own spirit to a level higher than the one that preceded it.

The situation can easily be misunderstood. One may note only the fall into materialism and be saddened by it. But while the *outlook* of this period had to restrict itself to the external physical world, a *purified, independent human spirituality as experience* developed in the soul's depths. In the Michael Age, this spirituality may no longer remain unconscious *experience*, it must become conscious of its real nature, and that signifies the entrance of the Michael being into human souls. For a certain period of time, human beings filled their own spirit with material views of the natural world. Now they are to fill it again with a spirituality truly their own, as cosmic content.

For a time, thought-forming lost itself to material aspects of the cosmos. Now it must, itself again in the cosmic Spirit. Warmth and spirituality, permeated with essential being, can flow into the cold, abstract thought world. This characterizes the dawn of the Michael Age.

Only in separation from the thought being of the cosmos could a consciousness of freedom develop in the depths of human souls. What had its origin in the heights had to be discovered anew out of the depths. That, is why the development of this consciousness of freedom had to be based temporarily on a natural science that focused its attention exclusively on externals. During the period in which human beings were unconsciously readying their spirit for pure Idea, their senses were focused outward on the material, a realm that did not impinge in any way on the delicate seed growing up within them.

But an experiencing of the spiritual and, coupled with it, spiritual perception itself, can enter again in a new way into the contemplation of external matter. The knowledge of nature acquired under the sign of materialism can be grasped in its spiritual aspect in the soul's inwardness. Michael, who once spoke "from above," can be heard speaking "from within," where he has taken up his new abode. We might say, to put it more imaginatively, that the Sun Element that humanity absorbed for so long only from the cosmos will begin shining in the soul itself. People will learn to speak of an "inner Sun." This will not cause human beings to feel less beings on the earth in their lives between birth and death, but they will know themselves to be *guided by the Sun* on their earthly course. They will come to feel how true it is that a Being illumines them inwardly with a Light that, though it shines upon earthly existence, is not lit there. As the Age of Michael dawns, it may seem as though all this were still remote from human experience. Spiritually, however, it is near; it needs only be "seen." It is immeasurably important that people's ideas should not stop at being merely "thoughts," but should go on to become "seeing" in the thinking of them.

III.

The Michael-Christ Experience

November 9, 1924

Those who give themselves in a truly heartfelt way to inner contemplation of Michael's deeds and being will come to a real understanding of the way human beings must conceive a world that is no longer either Divine Being or its Revelation, nor yet an ongoing *effect*, but simply the Gods' wrought-work. To look into this world with insight is to have shapes and forms in view that everywhere speak plainly of Divinity, but in which a self-sustaining Divine Being is no longer to be found unless one gives oneself up to illusion. We should not restrict our insight to the merely knowable. The configuration of the world surrounding humanity today manifests itself most clearly to this view. But of far greater import for everyday life is the feeling, the will, the working in a world felt to be formed, indeed, in accordance with the Divine Image but not to be experienced as God-enlivened. **To bring genuine moral life into a world of this kind requires the generating of ethical impulses such as are described in my *Philosophy of Freedom*.**

Michael's being and present sphere of action can shine out in this wrought-work world for those of true feeling. Michael does not make an appearance in the physical realm; he restricts himself and all his activity to a supersensible region immediately bordering on the physical world as this exists in the present phase of cosmic evolution. This renders it impossible that the impression of Michael's being that we receive could mislead us into a fantastic view of nature, or make us try to share cultural-practical life in our God-wrought but not God-enlivened world as though we could be impelled to action by any but our own ethical-spiritual impulses. Whether thinking or willing, human beings will always have to approach Michael by transposing themselves into the spiritual realms.

In so doing, we will live spiritually in the following way. We will take knowledge and life as they have had to be taken since the fifteenth century. But we will hold fast to the Michaelic revelation, letting it shine like a light illumining our thoughts as we garner them from the world of nature; we will carry them in our hearts as warmth, even though we must live in accordance with the world of divine wrought-works. We will not only observe and experience the present-day world, but also that world mediated by Michael as well – a *past* state of the world, one brought by Michael's deeds and being into the present.

If it were otherwise, if Michael's activity were such that he brought his deeds into the world that we have to know and experience as physical, then we would presently be experiencing something of the world that really was once upon a time, but that is no longer. If such a thing were to come to pass, this illusory grasp of the world would lead man's soul away from reality suited to it and into another, Luciferic sphere.

Michael's way of making the past effective in our present experience is in keeping with the purposes of true spiritual world progress, in which nothing of a Luciferic nature has a part. It is important for human souls, in their conceiving of Michael's mission, to have a right picture of its avoidance of everything Luciferic.

This understanding of the Michaelic-Light making its appearance on the scene of human history provides the basis for finding the right approach to Christ as well.

Michael provides the proper orientation in those concerns where human beings approach the world around them in knowledge and action, whereas they will have to find an inner path to Christ.

Considering the form that our approach to nature has assumed during the last five centuries, it is thoroughly understandable that supersensible knowledge, too, should have become what it is today in our modern conceiving.

Nature has to be known and experienced as devoid of God. But, in this kind of relationship to the world, we are no longer able to experience ourselves. The relationship to nature that comes naturally to an individual as a self in this epoch gives us no understanding of ourselves as supersensible beings, and with only this relationship in view, we cannot live ethically in a way attuned to our humanity.

So it has come about that this way of living and experiencing is not allowed to come into contact with anything that has to do with our supersensible being, or, indeed, with the supersensible world. That realm is considered inaccessible to human knowing. An extra- or super-scientific realm of belief and revelation has to be postulated in addition to the scientifically knowable.

But the purely spiritual activity of Christ presents the opposite picture. Ever since the Mystery of Golgotha, it has been possible to reach Him. **The relationship to Christ need not remain a vague, mystical one of unilluminated feeling; it can become a fully concrete, deep, clear human experience.**

From this communion with the Christ the human soul garners what it needs to know about its own supersensible nature. The revelation of faith must be felt to receive a constant influx of living experience of the Christ. To feel Him as the Being who mediates to the human soul the perception of its own supersensible nature leads to a thorough Christianizing of life.

The Michael experience and the Christ experience can thus stand side by side. Michael will guide us in the right way to a supersensible experience of nature, and this outlook on nature will be able to take its place, undistorted, alongside a spiritual view of the world and of the human being as a universal being.

Through a right relationship to Christ, humans will experience in living soul-intercourse with Him what they could otherwise receive only in the form of traditional revelations of faith. The inner world of the soul's experience can then be experienced as spiritually illumined and the outer world of nature as spiritually sustained.

If human beings were to try to attain insight into their own supersensible being without communion with the Christ, they would be seduced away from themselves and into the realm of Ahriman. **Christ is the cosmically ordained carrier of humanity's impulses towards the future. For the human soul to unite with the Christ means receiving into itself, for cosmically intended nurturing, the seeds of its own future.** Other beings whose present-day forms are such as the cosmos intends for humanity only in the future belong to the Ahrimanic sphere. **Union with the Christ means protecting oneself properly from Ahrimanic influences.**

Those individuals who insist on keeping traditional religious revelation free of any inclusion of human knowledge betray the fear that humanity may otherwise fall victim to Ahrimanic influences. We have to understand this fear. But it is necessary, on the other hand, to understand how it contributes to the knowing and acknowledging of Christ when the experience of Him is ascribed to the grace-filled flowing of the spiritual into human souls.

Thus the Michael experience and the Christ experience can stand side by side in future. This will enable human beings to travel their true path of freedom between seduction by Luciferic illusions in their thinking and living, and Ahrimanic enticement into a future shape of things that satisfies their conceit but does not rightly belong to *them* in the present epoch.

To fall victim to Luciferic illusions means to fall short of becoming fully human, that is, to fail to make the effort to progress to the stage of freedom, remaining content to stay at the earlier evolutionary divine-human level. To fall victim to Ahrimanic enticement means being unwilling to wait for the right cosmic moment to come to a certain stage of humanness and instead to take this stage prematurely.

In future, Michael-Christ will stand as path-indicators at the start of the route along which humanity, in keeping with cosmic goals, can advance between Lucifer and Ahriman and arrive at its world destination.

IV.

Michael's Mission in the Cosmic Age of Human Freedom

November 16, 1924

If one approaches the study of Michael's contemporary mission, experiencing it spiritually, it becomes possible to see the cosmic nature of freedom in spiritual-scientific illumination.

This is not meant with reference to my *Philosophy of Freedom*, a work based on purely human cognitive powers, when they can be applied to the realm of the spirit. One does not need to commune with Beings of other worlds to attain the kind of insight dealt with there. But it might be said that *The Philosophy of Freedom* prepares the reader for an understanding of freedom that can become actual experience of spiritual communion with Michael. That experience may be described as follows.

If freedom is really to underlie human action, what is done in its light may not depend in any way whatsoever on the human physical and etheric organization. Free deeds can issue only from the I, and the astral body must be able to attune itself to this free I-activity in order to transmit it to the physical and etheric bodies. But this is only one aspect of the matter; the other becomes clear when we relate it to Michael's mission. **What human beings experience in freedom may also not be allowed to influence their physical and etheric bodies in any way.** If that were to happen, humanity would lose all connection with what it has become in its passage through the stages of its development influenced by divine-spiritual *being* and divine-spiritual *revelation*.

Human beings' experience of what remains the *mere wrought-work of their divine-spiritual surroundings* must not exert an influence on anything but the spirit (or ego) element in them. The only thing permitted to influence their physical and etheric organism is what began within the being and revelation of the divine-spiritual and continues on within a human being's own being, not what lies outside. **What lies outside must not come in touch with what lives within in human nature as the element of freedom.**

That this is possible derives solely from the fact that Michael carries over from a primeval period of evolution something that connects human beings with divine-spiritual reality without exercising any present effect on their physical and etheric structure. This provides the basis in Michael's mission for human communion with the spiritual world that takes place without involving natural processes.

It is elevating to witness how Michael lifts humanity's being into the sphere of the Spirit while its unconscious or subconscious aspects, developing below the level where freedom reigns, grow ever more deeply involved with matter.

Humanity's position in relationship to the being of the world will become an increasing puzzle to it if human beings do not rise to recognition of such matters as Michael's mission while still feeling their ties with nature's beings and processes. The ties with nature are learned as though from external perception; those with the spiritual world issue from something resembling an inner conversation with a form of being to which one gains access by opening oneself to a spiritual view of the universe.

In order for human beings to carry out impulses conceived in freedom, they must be able to keep certain workings of nature that act upon their being out of the cosmos from affecting them. This keeping at arm's length goes on in the subconscious when, on the conscious level, forces are active that support the I's life in freedom. **Awareness of free action is a matter of inward perception for an individual;** but for spiritual Beings, who relate to humans from other spheres of the world, the situation is different. The Being from

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the hierarchy of Angels who is charged with carrying over an individual's existence from one earthly life to another is at once aware, in witnessing free human action, that the human being involved is repelling cosmic forces that seek to go on shaping him or her, forces that are trying to continue giving the organization of the I such necessary physical support as they gave it before the Age of Michael set in.

As a Being of the rank of Archangel, Michael receives his impressions with the help of beings of the rank of Angels. He devotes himself, in the way described, to the task of conveying to human beings out of the spiritual realms of the cosmos the forces that can act as a replacement for suppressed natural forces.

Michael achieves this by bringing his activity into the most perfect attunement with the Mystery of Golgotha.

Christ's activity in our earthly evolution harbors the forces needed by human beings, when they act in freedom, to balance out the suppressed impulses that derive from nature. But they must then devote their souls truly to the inner communion with the Christ that was spoken of in these communications on the subject of the Michael mission.

Human beings are aware that they are confronting reality when they confront the physical sun and receive its light and warmth. Just so must they live in relationship to Christ, the spiritual Sun, which has united its existence with that of earth, and take up livingly into their souls what corresponds in the spiritual world to warmth and light.

They will feel themselves permeated by "spiritual warmth" as they experience "Christ within them," and will say as they sense this permeation: "This warmth frees my humanity from cosmic ties by which it must not remain bound. Divine-spiritual Existence in primeval times had the task of bringing me to the attainment of freedom in regions in which it cannot now accompany me further, but in these regions it gave me the Christ in order that Christ's forces may now endow me as a free being with what was once supplied as a natural endowment by Divine-spiritual Existence in primeval times. Then, however, the way of nature and the way of the spirit were one. This warmth restores me to the Divine Element from which I sprang."

As human beings feel this, their experience in and with the Christ becomes one in innermost soul-warmth with the experience of true, genuine humanness. "Christ gives me my human nature." Such will be the profound sense suffusing the soul to its depths. And after one has experienced this feeling, one goes on further to experience oneself raised up by the Christ beyond mere earthly existence, becoming one with the starry surroundings that encompass the earth and with everything divine-spiritual to be met with there.

The same holds true of spiritual light. **An individual can sense his humanity in fullness when he becomes aware of himself as a free agent.** But a certain darkness accompanies this experience. Light's ancient divine-spiritual Source no longer shines. But the Light with which Christ endows the human I restores that primeval illumination. In communion of this kind with the Christ, one's whole soul can be irradiated by the Sun-like thought: "The glorious divine Light of ancient days lives again and shines out, though its luminosity is not the luminosity of nature." Today we can unite ourselves with spiritual-cosmic light-forces from a distant past in which we were not yet free individualities. Once we understand and unite our souls with Michael's mission, we can find in this illumination our guide for traveling the rightful human path.

This means that human beings will feel in spiritual warmth the impulse to carry them into the cosmic future in a way that enables them to remain true, to the original gifts they received from the divine-spiritual beings even though, in their own realm as human beings, they have now evolved to the stage of free individuality. Human beings thus will sense in the spiritual Light the force to lead them, with ever higher and more inclusive perceptive consciousness, into the world in which they will find themselves together again, as free agents, with their original Gods.

If we were to shy away from a full experience of freedom and become fixed in our original state of existence, willing to continue on in the condition of primeval, naive divine grace that once prevailed, we would be led to Lucifer, whose desire it is to reject the world as it, is

today.

If we were to accept the present state of things, and be content to let only that universal rule of natural law conceived by a morally neutral intellect prevail, while restricting ourselves to a merely mental experience of freedom, we would be led – in this age, when evolution must continue into ever deeper regions of the soul in order to counterbalance those higher ones in which freedom reigns – to **Ahriman, who would like to see the contemporary world turn into a purely intellectual cosmos.**

These are the regions where security and certainty flourish in the souls and spirits of human beings who, looking outward in spirit see Michael and looking inward see the Christ. This certainty and security makes it possible for them to travel the cosmic path on which, never losing touch with their origin, they will find their rightful future perfecting.

APPENDIX

JOHANNES TRITHEMIUS 1462-1516

Abbot of Sponheim

*A Treatise on the seven secondary causes, i.e., intelligences,
or spirits, who moves the spheres according to God*

A Little Book or MYSTICAL CRONOLOGY

Containing within a Short Compass Marvelous Secrets Worthy of Interest

*[Johannis Trithemii abbatis spanheimensis, de septem secundeis, id est intelligentiis sive spiritibus orbes post Deum moventibus libellus sive chronologia mystica multa scituque digna, mira brevitate in se completens arcana (1515). Written 1508. The present translation lays no claim to scholarliness or more than general accuracy. It was translated by the editor for the interest of the reader: from the French, Jean Trithème, *Traité des Causes Secondes*. Milan: Sebastiani (Arche), 1974.*

To the august and pious Maximilian I, Emperor & Caesar by the Grace of God:

Most wise Emperor, this lower world, created and organized by the First Intelligence, who is God, is ruled by Secondary Intelligences. Hermes, who gave us the science of the Magi, confirms this view when he says that seven Spirits were assigned to the seven Planets from the beginning of the heavens and of the earth.

Each of these Spirits rules the universe in turn for a period of 354 years and 4 months. Many learned scholars, up to the present day, have approved this assertion, which I do not guarantee, but only lay before your Most Blessed Majesty.

The first Angel or Spirit, that of *Saturn*, is called *Oriphiel*. God confided the government of the world to him starting with the beginning of creation. *Oriphiel's* reign began on March 15 and lasts 354 years and 4 months. The name *Oriphiel* was given to him on account of his spiritual office, not his nature. Under his rule, humans were crude and savage. Their customs recalled those of wild beasts of the wilderness. This requires no demonstration, for it is clearly evident from the Book of Genesis.

The second guiding Spirit of the world was *Anael*, the Spirit of *Venus*, who, following *Oriphiel*, began to emit stellar influence in the year of the world 354, on June 24. *Anael* ruled the world for 354 years and 4 months until the year of creation 708, as calculation shows. Under *Anael's* rule, human beings began to be less crude. They built houses and cities, invented manual arts, and began the twin arts of the weaving and spinning of yarn. They also gave themselves up to the pleasures of the flesh and took wives. Forgetting God, they

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grew distant in many things from natural simplicity, invented games and songs, set themselves to playing the kithara and imagined all that had to do with *Venus* and her cult. This life of debauchery ended only with the deluge that was the punishment for their depravity.

The third ruler, *Zachariel*, the Angel of *Jupiter*, began to rule the world in the year 708 after the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the eighth month – that is, on October 26. *Zachariel* ruled the universe for 354 years and 4 months until the year 1060. Under *Zachariel's* direction humans began to take turns usurping power. They began to hunt, to put up tents, to decorate their bodies with different kinds of clothes. The good were separated from the evil – the good invoked God, like Enoch who entered into Him, while the evil plunged into pleasures of the flesh. Under *Zachariel*, people began to live in society, to submit to laws imposed upon them by the strongest among them and, distancing themselves from their earlier barbarism, to civilize themselves. It was under *Zachariel's* rule that Adam, the first human being, died, leaving to posterity the inevitability of death. Lastly, in these days, several human inventions occurred, curious arts, as historians tell its.

The fourth ruler of the world was *Raphael*, the Spirit of *Mercury*, whose rule began on February 24 of the year 1063 following the creation of the earth and the heavens, and lasted 354 years and 4 months. The invention of writing goes back to this period. To begin with, letters were imagined in the forms of trees and plants, later taking on more careful forms to be modified at will. Under *Raphael*, the use of musical instruments spread; commerce and trading were practiced, as well as long-distance navigation, and many other marvelous things.

The fifth ruler of the world was *Samael*, the Angel of *Mars*, who began to reign on June 26, 1417.

Samael ruled for 354 years and 4 months and impressed his influence strongly upon humanity. Under *Samael's* reign, in the year of the world 1656, the universal flood occurred, as the Book of Genesis clearly shows. It is a remarkable fact, as the ancient philosophers tell us, that each time *Samael*, the Genius of Mars, governs the world, a complete change occurs in some great monarchy: religions and castes are overturned; great persons and princes are exiled; laws are changed – as one can easily see in the historians. Such changes do not occur right at the beginning of *Samael's* reign, but only as it enters its second half. The same is true for all the other planetary Spirits, as history shows. That is, the influence of the secondary powers reaches its height when the stars reach the zenith of their revolution.

The sixth ruler of the world was *Gabriel*, Angel of the *Moon*. *Gabriel* began his reign after that of *Samael*, the Spirit of *Mars*, on October 28, 1771 years after the creation of the world. *Gabriel's* rule lasted 354 years and 4 months until the year 2126. During this period human beings multiplied further and founded many new cities. It must be noted, too, that, according to the Hebrews, the Flood occurred under the rule of *Mars* in the year of the world 1656. Isidore and Beda, two interpreters of the Septuagint, on the other hand, claim that this cataclysm occurred in the year 2242 – that is, under the rule of *Gabriel*, Spirit of the *Moon*, which by calculation seems to me closer to the truth, though this is not the place to prove it.

The seventh ruler of the world was *Michael*, the Angel of the *Sun*, whose rule began, according to ordinary calculation, on February 24 in the year 2126 after the creation, and finished 354 years and 4 months later in the year 2480. Under the rule of this Angel of the Sun, according to those historians most worthy of belief, Kings first began to appear among mortals, and among these was Nimrod, the first to use sovereign power to tyrannize his fellows who were devoured by passions. Thus human folly instituted the cult of the Gods. Humans began to worship the lower principles as Gods. At this time, too, humanity invented various arts: Mathematics, Astronomy, Magic. The cult of a single God was practiced by different creatures but, due to human superstition, knowledge of the true God was gradually forgotten. At this time, likewise, agriculture began to be practiced and human beings began to have more civilized customs and institutions.

In eighth place, *Oriphiel*, the Angel of *Saturn*, returned and ruled the universe again for 354

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years and 4 months – from June 26, 2480 until September, 2834. Under this Angel's rule, nations multiplied, the earth was divided into regions, and many kingdoms were founded. The Tower of Babel was built and "the confusion of tongues" occurred. Thus humanity dispersed over the earth and human beings began energetically to work the soil and cultivate fields, to sow wheat and plant vines, to prune fruit trees and busy themselves with all that concerned food and clothing. From this moment on, the distinction of nobility began to manifest and those who excelled by their virtue and genius received the insignia they deserved from their princes. At this time, too, humanity began to gain a sense of the universe as a whole, as, after the multiplication of races and the founding of many kingdoms, different languages came into being.

Then, in ninth place, the Spirit of *Venus*, *Anael*, began to rule the world once more. This was on October 29 in the year 2834 after the creation of the heavens and the earth. *Anael* ruled for 354 years and 4 months until the year of the world 3189. During this period, human beings, forgetting God, began to create a cult of the Dead. They began to worship the Dead and their statues in place of God. This was an error that lasted more than two thousand years. Fashion introduced the use of precious ornaments for the body and, with the help of different sorts of musical instruments, humanity abandoned itself once again to the passions and pleasures of the flesh, raising these up and even dedicating statues and temples to them. During this time Zoroaster, the first King of the Bactrians and other peoples, defeated in battle by Ninus, King of the Assyrians, discovered the mystery of incantations and curses.

In tenth place, *Zachariel*, the Angel of *Jupiter*, took up the direction of the world. This was on the last day of February in the year 3189 after the foundation of the heavens and the earth. *Zachariel* ruled for 354 years and 4 months, until the year 3543. This was a happy period, known with reason as the "Golden Age." The abundance of all the earth's goods led to the increase of the human species and the universe reached the height of its splendor. During this period, God gave Abraham the law of circumcision, promising for the first time the redemption of humanity by the incarnation of his only Son. Under *Zachariel's* rule, the Patriarchs, those founders of the spirit of justice, appeared. By their will and their works, the Just were separated from the unjust. During this time, too, Jupiter, under the name of Lisanius, King and Son of Heaven and of God, was the first to give laws to the Arcadians, succeeding in civilizing them, building temples, instituting a priestly craft, and gaining many useful things for his people. This was why they gave him the name of Jupiter and, after his death, looked on him as a God. Yet he originated in the priestly caste of Heber, as history declares. It is also said that during this Angel's rule Prometheus, son of Atlantus, created humanity because, finding them coarse, he made them learned, human, good, and accomplished in manners and customs. He also invented the art of animating images. And it was he who first used the ring, the scepter, and the diadem, and invented royal insignia. At the same time, other sages of the race of Jupiter united men and women with the bonds of marriage, and brought humanity many other useful things. On account of their wisdom, after their death, these sages were raised into the ranks of the Gods. Of this kind were: Phoroneus, who was the first to give the Greeks laws and justice, Apollo, Minerva, Ceres, Serapis (among the Egyptians), and countless others.

In eleventh place, *Raphael*, the Spirit of *Mercury*, resumed the guidance of the world again on July 1, in the year of the world 3543, ruling 354 years and 4 months until the year 3897 from the creation of the world. During this period, as ancient historians clearly show, humanity yielded with ardor to the study of wisdom. Among the most illustrious of these devotees of wisdom were: Mercurius, Bacchus, Omogyrus, Isis, Inachus, Argus, Apollo, Cecrops, and many others who, by their discoveries, were useful to the world and to posterity. During this time, too, various superstitions arose in humankind, such as the cult of idols, incantations, and the art of producing diabolical prodigies. Everything generally attributable to the subtlety and genius of Mercury took on vast proportions. Moses, the most wise leader of the Hebrews, the expert in many sciences and in all the arts, priest of the sole and true God, delivered his people from the slavery in which the Egyptians had kept them. At this same time, Janus the First ruled over Italy; Saturn, who taught the manuring of fields and was taken for a God, succeeded him. About this time, too, Cadmus invented the Greek

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letters and Carmetis, daughter of Evander, Latin letters. It was also in the reign of *Raphael*, Angel of *Mercury*, that the All-Powerful gave his people by the intermediary of Moses, the Law to which the Incarnation of CHRIST gave a dazzling testimony. A prodigious variety of cults manifested in the world. There were then numerous Sibyls, Prophets, Augurs, Haruspices, Magi, Diviners, not to mention the Sibyls of Erythrea, Delphi, and Phrygia.

In the twelfth epoch, *Samael*, Angel of *Mars*, became the world's ruler for a second time. This was on October 2 of the year of the world 3897. *Samael* ruled 354 years and 4 months until the year 4252. Under his reign, the great and celebrated destruction of Troy in Asia Minor occurred. Monarchies and many kingdoms fell and new ones were founded, such as Paris, Mainz, Carthage, Naples, and others. New kingdoms, too, arose, such as that of Lacedemon, Corinth, Jerusalem, etc.

During this period, long wars and great struggles of Kings and nations unfolded, as well as dynastic changes. The Venetians, for example, trace the origin of their people and the founding of their city to this period of the taking of Troy. More remarkably still, several nations of Europe and Asia lay claim to Trojan descent – but in the desire to glorify themselves, as if there had not existed famous people and nations in Europe before the ruin of Troy, the proofs they offer in support of the nobility of their origin are vain and deceptive.

Under the dominion of this same planet, *Mars*, Saul, the First, was chosen King of the Jews. After him came David, then his son Solomon, who built to the true God a Temple in Jerusalem that was famous throughout the world. Then the Divine Spirit, illuminating its prophets with the incomparable clarity of grace, gave them not only the gift of predicting the future incarnation of the Savior, but also many other things, as the Holy Scriptures attest. Among these prophets, we may cite Nathan, son of King David, Gad, Azaph, Achaias, Semeias, Azarias, Anan, and many others. The Greek poet Homer, singer of the Fall of Troy, the Phrygian Dares and the Cretan Dictis who witnessed and told of it, are also said to have lived at this time.

For the thirteenth period, *Gabriel*, the genius of the *Moon*, resumed the rulership of the world on January 30 of the year 4252 from the world's beginning. *Gabriel* ruled 354 years and 4 months, until the year 4606. During this period several great prophets shone among the Hebrews: Elisha, Micah, Abdiah, and others. Among the Hebrews, likewise, Kings succeeded each other with rapidity. Lycurgus gave the Spartans a code and laws. Capitus, Liberius, Romulus, and Procas Sylius, and Numitor – Italian Kings – flourished under this Spirit's reign. Under this same Lunar influence a number of other kingdoms arose, such as those of the Lydians, the Medes, the Macedonians, the Spartans, etc., while the Assyrian monarchy was ended by Sardanapalus. The Kingdom of Media also disappeared. At this time, many different kinds of laws were imposed upon humanity. Human beings neglected the worship of God. The cult of idols became widespread. In 4491, the 239th year of *Gabriel's* reign, the foundations of Rome were laid. The dominion of the Sylians ended in Italy, their place being taken by the Romans. Around this time, too, the Seven Sages appeared in Greece: Thales, Solon, Cheilon, Periander, Cleobulus, Bias of Priene, and Pittacus. From this moment on, philosophers and poets began to be held in high esteem. Romulus, founder of Rome, fratricide, and abettor of sedition, ruled the city for 37 years. His successor, Numa Pompilius, ruled for 42 years, developing the cult of the Gods and dying in the time of Ezechias, King of the Jews. Toward the end of *Gabriel's* rule, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, captured and destroyed Jerusalem and led King Sedecias and his people into captivity. The prophet Jeremiah foretold both this destruction and the end of this captivity.

Following *Gabriel*, on May 1 of the year of the world 4606, *Michael*, the Spirit of the *Sun*, took up the world's scepter for the second time. *Michael* ruled the universe for 354 years and 4 months, until the year 4960 of the world's foundation. During his period, Merodach, King of Babylon, gave the Hebrew people their liberty and their King. This was under the influence of *Michael*, who, as the book of Daniel tells, protected the Jews whom God had given him. At this time, too, the Persian monarchy arose whose first Kings, Darius and Cyrus, overturned the great Babylonian monarchy. This was in the reign of Balthasar, as Daniel and the

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prophets predicted. The Cumaean Sibyl was also famous then, because of the offer she made to King Tarquin the Elder to sell him at once, and at the same price, the nine books containing the series of predictions having to do with the Roman Republic. When the King refused to pay the price that was asked, the Sybil burnt the first three books before his eyes, and then demanded the same sum for the remaining six. Refused again, she threw three more books into the fire, and would have done the same for the last three, had not the King, persuaded by his Counselors, saved these books from destruction by agreeing to pay the price asked in the beginning for the set of nine. These same Romans, after the expulsion of their Kings, designated two Consuls annually. This was the period when Phalaris, the tyrant, ruled in Sicily. Magic was held in great esteem at this time among the Kings of Persia. Pythagoras and other philosophers flourished in Greece. The city of Jerusalem and its Temple were reconstructed. The prophet Esdras restored from memory the Books of Moses, which had been burnt by the Chaldeans. This new text was called the Babylonian version. Xerxes, King of Persia, led an army against the Greeks, but without great effect. The Gauls captured, burned, and destroyed Rome, except for the Capitol which was saved by a goose who awoke the sleeping soldiers with his honking. The Athenians were then engaged in their famous wars and the philosophers Socrates and Plato gained their renown. Following the repeal of the Consuls, the Romans instituted the offices of the Tribunes and the Aediles. Meanwhile, a host of calamities assailed them.

Immediately following the end of *Michael's* dominion, Alexander the Great ruled in Macedonia; he overcame the Persian monarchy under Darius, and brought all Asia under his scepter, as well as a part of Europe. He died at the age of 33, after a reign of 12 years and 5 months. Many wars and ills followed his death and his empire was dismembered into four parts. Among the Hebrews, competitions were held for the High Priesthood for the first time. And the Kingdom of Syria was born.

After *Michael*, *Oriphiel*, the Spirit of *Saturn*, took up the government of the world for the third time (and the fifteenth period) on the last day of September in the year 4960 from the beginning of the world. He ruled for 354 years and 4 months, until the year 5315. Under his rule, the Punic Wars began between the Romans and the Carthaginians. The city of Rome was almost completely destroyed by fire and water. The Colossus, a bronze sculpture, 126 feet high, was toppled by an earthquake. After the Punic War, Rome, which had warred unceasingly for 440 years, enjoyed a year of peace. Jerusalem and its Temple were burnt and destroyed by Antiochus and Epiphanes. The Maccabees became famous for glorious battles. During this period, too, 606 years after the founding of Rome, Carthage was destroyed and burned for seventeen days. In Sicily, the revolt of the 70,000 slaves against their masters occurred. Great wonders took place at this time in Europe. Domestic animals fled into the woods, blood flowed, and an exploding ball of fire fell from the sky with a great din. Mithridates, King of Pontus and Armenia, waged a war against Rome for 40 years. The Kingdom of the Hebrews was restored, after a hiatus lasting 575 years – from Zedechias to Aristobulus. The Germans and the Teutons invaded Italy and were defeated after many battles, losing 160,000 men, not counting the considerable number of those who perished with their families under Caius and Manlius, after having treacherously killed many Romans. Finally, 40 years of civil war desolated Italy. Three suns appeared in Rome, melting, after a short time, into one. A few years later, Julius Caesar usurped the supreme power, and following him Augustus extended his power into Asia and Africa, uniting these under a single rule. Augustus ruled for 36 years, during which God gave the world peace.

In the year of the world 5199, the 751st year of Rome's foundation, the 42nd year of Octavius Caesar Augustus, 245 years into the reign of *Oriphiel*, the Spirit of *Saturn*, the eighth month, on December 25, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born of the Virgin Mary, in Bethlehem, in Judea. Note that by the admirable ordering of divine Providence, the universe was created in the first rulership of *Oriphiel* or Saturn and was saved, restored, and renewed by his mercy during his third administration – a harmonious agreement which sufficiently proves the influence of the seven planets on the government of the universe. Indeed, during *Oriphiel's* first rulership, the whole world formed but a single, vast monarchy, which, during his second rulership, subdivided into a multitude of little kingdoms – as we

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have shown above – which themselves were brought into unity once again under his third rulership. This notwithstanding, it is clear to those with clairvoyant eyes that the second period of *Oriphiel* also saw a single monarchy with the building of the Tower of Babel. During this third reign of *Oriphiel* the Kingdom of the Jews was scattered and the perpetual sacrifice of victims was suspended. And freedom will not be given to the Jews again until the third period of *Michael* in August 1880 of the Christian Era, which is the year of the world 7170. In the year 299 of the Angel *Oriphiel's* rulership, Peter transferred the great Office of the Pontiff of the Universal Christian Church from Judea to Rome. Many Jews and Gentiles embraced the Christian religion on account of the preaching of sermons of great simplicity and unsophistication, illuminated not by human knowledge but by the Spirit of God. The world at this moment returned to the innocence and simplicity of the first age. In both, *Oriphiel*, Spirit of *Saturn*, presided. The heavens were united with the earth. Two scepters were given to humanity to rule the world: a higher one, for spiritual things, was given to the Pope; another, for temporal things, was given to the Emperor. Many Christians, persecuted by the princes of this world, perished for their faith. Toward the end of *Oriphiel's* reign, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, and the Jews were scattered over all the earth: 110,000 were killed; 80,000 were sold; and the rest fled. In this way, Rome completely destroyed Judea.

In sixteenth place, after *Oriphiel*, *Anael*, Spirit of *Venus*, took up the direction of the universe for the third time on the last day of January, 5315 years from the foundation of the heavens and the earth, 109 years after Christ's Nativity – to rule for 354 years and 4 months to the year of the world 5669 and 4 months, which is the year 463 of the Lord's incarnation. We may note that, during almost this entire reign of the Angel of *Venus*, the Christian Church increased amidst persecutions, and finally prevailed after thousands were murdered for their faith in Christ. Numerous heresies then arose in the bosom of the Church – heresies that were extinguished from the blood of the virtuous only with great trouble and after much time. At that time, too, numerous people arose who were celebrated in all branches of knowledge: theologians, astronomers, doctors, orators, historians – not only among the gentiles but also among Christians. The faithless finally stopped persecuting the Church after Constantine the Great was baptized in the year of the world 5539 – when the Angel of *Venus*, *Anael*, had passed the culminating point of its cycle of dominion. After this there were still some troubles caused by impious people, but the Church generally lived in peace. During this period, the human race which, since the time of King Ninus had been miserably lost in the cult of idols for 2,300 years, was mercifully brought back to knowledge of the one God. Many subtle arts grew up and, in agreement with the nature of *Venus*, developed and embellished themselves. For human manners change with the times and things below correspond with things above, and receive their influence. The soul, besides, is free, and not under the influence of the stars, unless it becomes stained, being too attached to the body, and allows itself to be guided by the latter. For the Angels, engines of the orbs, can neither destroy nor alter anything established by nature. A huge comet announced the death of Constantine. The Arian heresy troubled the Holy Church in many places. Toward the end of *Anael's* rule, in the time of the Emperor Julian, crosses appeared on the linen robes of certain persons. In Asia and Palestine, wars, plagues, and famines followed the apparitions in which these crosses were seen. In these days, too, around the year 360 of the Christian Era, the Franks came out of Germany and invaded, occupied, and conquered Gaul, to which they gave their name. France was great and large, and its capital was Mainz (Herbipolis). Bavarians, Swabians, Saxons, Thuringians, the inhabitants of the Rhine, and the tribes surrounding the Papal Kingdom occupied the greater part of what was then France and which today includes Germany. 280 years into this reign of *Anael*, the Roman Empire began its decline. Its capital, Rome, was captured and burned by the Goths. This was after Constantine had moved the seat of the Empire to Byzantium, a fatal deed that caused the decadence of the entire monarchy. Indeed, toward the end of *Anael's* rule, there appeared, as historians tell, Radagif, Alaric, and Athaulfe, Kings of the Goths, who were soon followed by Ganseric, King of the Vandals, and Attila, King of the Huns – all of whom invaded the whole of Europe and cut the Empire into pieces.

Following *Anael*, and in seventeenth place, *Zachariel*, Spirit of *Jupiter*, took up the direction

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of the world for the third time on June 1 of the year of the world 5669, which is the year 463 after the Birth of the Saviour. He ruled for 354 years and 4 months, to the year of the world 6023, which is the year of the Savior 817. During these days, many people gave themselves passionately to the study of Christian philosophy. Many wonders occurred: comets, earthquakes, rainfalls of blood.

Merlin, who was born in Caledonia at the beginning of *Zachariel's* rule, made astonishing predictions. Arcturus, commonly called Arthur, most famous King of Britain, overcame the barbarians, brought peace to the Church, triumphed in many battles, spread abroad the Christian faith, and brought all of Gaul, Norway, Dacia, as well as several provinces, under his rule. Arthur was the most glorious prince of his time; after accomplishing many high deeds, he suddenly disappeared, and for many years the Britons awaited his return. Many poets sang of his prodigious exploits; under his rule, England flourished and commanded three times ten kingdoms.

In these days, the monastic Orders began to multiply in God's Church. Theodoric, King of the Arian Goths, conquered Italy. The Empire and the Church were in trouble. Zeno and Anastasius, the Emperor of the East, Theodoric and his successors in Italy, Honorius, King of the Vandals in Africa – all these exercised an unequalled tyranny. Clovis, King of the Franks of Gaul, was baptized, overcame the Goths, and imposed peace, though not in the whole world. This was in the time of St. Benedict, around the year 500 of the Christian Era, toward the opening of the reign of *Zachariel*, the Angel of *Jupiter* whose influence led to changes of dynasties and kingdoms, as the historians repeatedly affirm. What this Angel cannot do himself, he leaves to his successor *Raphael*, Angel of *Mercury*, who put Charlemagne on the throne of France. Indeed, during *Zachariel's* 350 years many empires crumbled, including those of the Goths, the Vandals, the Burgundians, the Lombards, the Thuringians, the Germans, the Bavarians, and many others. The Emperor Justinian was the first to give the Republic a coherent set of laws. Several eminent people gained renown under *Zachariel*. Justinian built the basilica of *Sancta Sophia* in Constantinople. The Empire, divided, was in trouble and confusion. Many omens appeared, as history tells. Kusro, King of the Persians, took Jerusalem. Later, he was assassinated by Heracles. At this time, around the year 600 of the Christian Era, the Arab Mohammed founded the sect of the Saracens. This would soon completely supplant the Roman Empire in Asia. Dagobert, King of France, conquered and destroyed the English, then called the "Saxons."

It must be noted that soon afterward the Christian faith began to weaken in Asia and Africa, while the sect of the Saracens gradually penetrated everywhere, soon covering the whole world, with the exception of Europe, where the Order of St. Benedict spread the Christian religion. Toward the year of our Lord 774, crosses appeared on some people's clothing and, a little later, the Roman Empire was divided, one part passing into Frankish hands under Charlemagne. This prince restored the Church and fought many wars. After his victories, the name "Western Gaul" was given to the Saxon territory.

In eighteenth place, following *Zachariel* (the Angel of *Jupiter*) *Raphael* (the Spirit of *Mercury*) assumed the government of the world for the third time on November 2, 6023 years after the world's Foundation, which is the year 817 of the Savior's birth. *Raphael* ruled the universe for 354 years and 4 months, until the year of the world 6378, which is the year of our Lord 1171. At the beginning of this period of *Mercury*, as we have said, the Roman Empire passed into the hands of Charlemagne. After him, his son Louis reigned for 25 years; after his death his sons fought against each other, thus weakening the Empire yet again. The Normans devastated Gaul. Twice, Rome was sacked by the Saracens. It rained blood for three days under Louis II. In Saxony, a whole town, with all its buildings and inhabitants, was swallowed up in a terrible abyss opened up by an earthquake. Toward the year of our Lord 910 great troubles arose in Italy, which left the Frankish Empire and chose its own Kings. The first was Berenger, Prince of Friuli, who was followed by seven Kings in a space of about fifty years – when the Empire passed to the Germans. The first Emperor was Otto I, who undertook to reconstruct the monarchy.

Otto II, his son, and Otto III, his nephew, the successors on the imperial throne, converted

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the Hungarian people to the Christian faith. In the year 1000 of the Christian Era, Otto III, who died without progeny, established the Electors of the Empire, as has been conserved even to our own days. The Saracens took Jerusalem again.

Many omens were seen in the sky, the air, on the earth, the sea, and in the waters. Following the death of Otto III, Henry I was elected by the princes to succeed him. Henry I reigned 20 years and founded the Church of Bamberg. At the same time, Kunegund, his wife, died a virgin, famous for her miracles. After Henry, Konrad I was elected Emperor. He reigned 20 years. At this time also Godefroy, Count of Bouillon, dispersed the infidels from Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Before the end of *Raphael's* rule, many omens and numerous signs were seen; and, a little later, the Tartar race left its frontiers and inflicted great evils on the Roman Empire. Famines, plagues, earthquakes, and other calamities befell the Empire. In the year of our Lord 1153, Frederick I, called Barbarossa, assumed the scepter. He reigned for 33 years beginning in the 336th year of *Raphael's* rulership and accomplished many admirable things. He increased the power of his Empire and successfully undertook many wars. Under his reign, the Egians and the Lithunians embraced Christianity.

In nineteenth place, *Samael*, the Angel of *Mars*, took up for the third time the governance of the world on March 3 of the year of the world 6378. He ruled 354 years and 4 months, until the year of the world 6732, or the year of the Lord 1525. Under his rulership there were many wars in the world; thousands of people perished, and several kingdoms lost their borders. The Emperor Frederick I had many differences with the Princes of Italy; he waged great wars against them in which they perished in the thousands. He ravaged Milan from top to bottom. Liege was destroyed. Jerusalem was taken again by the Saracens.

The Empire of the Tartars grew greatly on the face of the earth. This was a true calamity for the world – and continues still today. After Frederick, his son Henry was elected Emperor. And on Henry's death a schism between Philip and Otto divided the Empire, causing great troubles. Many battles were fought on the German borders – at Argentine, Cologne, Leiden, Spires in Württemberg and throughout the kingdom. The Order of Mendicants was founded during this epoch, in the fortieth year or so of *Samael*, which shows that all things are providential. In Asia and Africa, the Saracens fought the Christians in numerous places. Constantinople was taken by the Germans, and Baudoin, Count of Flanders, was raised to imperial dignity. More than 20,000 German children, seduced by lying speeches into trying to reconquer the Holy Land, were carried off by pirates on the open sea. A group of shepherds from Spain approached Paris, seizing the property of the clergy, much to the delight of the people – but when they sought to seize the possessions of lay people, they were massacred. In 1212 (of the Christian Era), Frederick II was elected Emperor; he reigned 33 years and did many things against the Church. In 1238, there was an eclipse and continuous earthquakes destroyed thousands of people. Frisia was almost completely submerged and more than 100,000 people drowned. The Tartars devastated Hungary and Poland, and conquered Armenia and several other countries. In the year 1244 of the Christian Era, a Jew, digging in the ground near Toledo, found a book in which it was written that Christ would be born of the Virgin Mary in the third world and would suffer for the salvation of humanity; he converted immediately and was baptized. The third world, i.e., the third period of the Spirit of *Saturn*, was, as we have shown, when Christ was born of a Virgin. During this period of *Samael*, the Roman pontiffs, deposing the Emperor Frederick, left the imperial throne empty for 28 years until the election of Rudolf, Count of Hamburg, who was chosen in favor of the other princely candidates: Henry, Count of Schwarzenburg in Thuringia; William, Count of Holland; Konrad, Frederick's son; Alphonzo, King of Castille; and Richard, Count of Cornwall, brother of the King of England. Ills multiplied upon the earth. Then, around the year of our Savior 1260, the Swiss Confederation was born, a small country that was to grow with time. Because its people were warlike, it attacked other nations and thus extended its borders. This made all Germany know of the existence of this new republic. Then, in the year 1273 of the Christian Era, the Assembly of Imperial Princes elected Rudolf of Hapsburg. He ruled for 18 years, prudent and wise in many things. All the Dukes of Austria descend from him. The Tartars invaded the Christian lands, seizing Constantinople and Greece, and causing much damage. The Saracens took several cities in Asia, killing more

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than 400 Christians. Upon the death of Rudolf, Adolf of Nassau was elected Emperor and ruled for 6 years. Albert, Rudolf's son, defeated him at Worms and, after killing him, was elected in his place in 1298. After ruling 10 years, he was himself killed by his brother's son. The Order of the Templars was destroyed on the orders of Pope Clement V. The island of Rhodes was taken by the Saracens following an uninterrupted siege lasting 4 years. After the assassination of Albert by his nephew, Henry VIII, Count of Luxemburg, was named Emperor and ruled 5 years. After him, Louis IV of Bavaria was Emperor for 32 years, beginning in 1315. The Roman Cardinals gave him the crown. Frederick, Duke of Austria, opposed them, but he was defeated. Then Charles IV, King of Bohemia, was Emperor for 31 years. He raised the Bishopric of Prague to an Archbishopric. There were great earthquakes. . . .

In 1453, Constantinople was taken by the Turks on account of the treachery of a certain Janvencs. Soon the whole of Greece abandoned Christianity. For, in a short time, several Christian principalities and kingdoms were taken and ravaged by the Turks. In these days, many serious wars broke out among the Christians – in Gaul, in England, in Saxony, in Westphalia, in Prussia, in Flanders, in Sweden, as well as in other countries. At this time, too, the art of printing, which was an admirable discovery, a divine gift, occurred at Mainz, the capital of Germany. In the year 1456 of the Christian Era, the Turks, massacred in Hungary by the faithful, perished in great numbers. An admirable pilgrimage of children came to Saint-Michel. There were earthquakes in the Kingdom of Naples which caused more than 40,000 people to perish....

In the year 1486 of the Christian Era, Maximilian, son of Frederick, was consecrated King of the Romans in Frankfurt and hailed as Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Julius II in 1508. He founded the military order of St. George against the heretics and the Turks. He vanquished the Swiss, reduced the Sicambrians, and triumphed over all rebels. The King of France, pursuing the imperial Crown according to his custom, hatched plots against the Empire; but the All-Powerful maintained what had been organized by *Samael*. In 1508, the Venetians, revolting against the authority of the Emperor, were punished by banishment and death. Stubbornness will be punished, wise submission rewarded. Toward the end of this third period of *Samael*, an important change, returning things to their original, first state, will lead to the destruction of many worlds. In fact, if by the will of God, the "gamma point" is brought to face the North, a great change will occur in some monarchy or great kingdom. A great religious sect will rise up to replace the ancient cults. It is to be feared that the fourth beast of the Apocalypse could lose a head. During the first period of *Samael*, *Mars* announced the flood; during the second, the fall of Troy; toward the end of the third, there will be a break in unity. Indeed, based upon the precedents, one might infer the following: This third period of *Mars* will not conclude without this prophecy being fulfilled and a new religion being instituted. Now, only 17 years remain between the present, year of the Christian Era (1508) and the end of *Samael's* reign in 1525. Omens of ill fortune will be seen. For, before the year 1525 of the Christian Era, the crosses seen these last 10 years on people's clothes will have their consequences....

For the twentieth period, *Gabriel*, Angel of the *Moon*, will take up the direction of the world again on June 4 of the year of creation 6732, which is the year 1525² of the Christian Era. *Gabriel* will govern the world for 354 years and 4 months until the year of the world 7086, the eighth month, or the year of the Lord 1879. It would require a prophecy for the series of future events. I do not guarantee the things I have written, most wise Caesar, but one can reasonably believe in them without damage to one's faith. There are some who believe that these periods correspond to lunar months; if such is your opinion, I could agree, but then it would be necessary to change what I have written.

For the rest, I bear witness with my hand and confess with my mouth that in all things I believe and admit only what the Catholic Church has approved by the authority of its Doctors; all else I thrust aside as vain and superstitious fiction.

² Cf. Rudolf Steiner in *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*, p.139: "In a note book of Rudolf Steiner, under the date of 18th August, 1924 ('Morning Lecture, Torquay') the

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following entry was made in connection with the Archangel epochs-"

-1879	Michael	Sun
1879-1510	Gabriel	Moon
1510-1190	Samael	Mars
1190- 850	Raphael	Mercury
850- 500	Zachariel	Jupiter
500- 150	Anael	Venus
150- 200	Oriphiel	Saturn

The Holy Archangel Michael is one of the most celebrated of the Angels and bodiless powers; he is called the Archistrategos, or chief commander, of all the bodiless powers. According to Holy Scripture and Tradition, he has interceded for humanity multiple times and continues to serve as the Defender of the Faith. St Michael is most often invoked for protection from invasion by enemies and from civil war, and for the defeat of adversaries on the field of battle. He is celebrated primarily on November 8 Michael is an archangel in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran systems of faith, he is called "Saint Michael the Archangel" and "Saint Michael". In the Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox religions, he is called "Saint Michael the Taxiarch". Michael is mentioned three times in the Book of Daniel. The idea that Michael was the advocate of the Jews became so prevalent that, in spite of the rabbinical prohibition against appealing to angels as Rudolf Steiner Archive & e.Lib: The Mission of the Archangel Michael - The Revelation of the Secrets of Mans Being.Â This lecture series is presented here with the kind permission of the Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, Switzerland. From Bn 194.1 and 174a, GA 194 and 174a. Copyright Â© 1961 This e.Text edition is provided with the cooperation of: The Anthroposophic Press.