

Spiritual-Scientific Consideration of Social and Pedagogic Questions

Esoteric Prelude to an Exoteric Consideration of the Social Question - I

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My dear friends!

Today I should like to introduce as a sort of parenthesis a deeper, Spiritual-Scientific consideration of the subject of our preceding lecture, the threefolding of the social organism. Naturally much of the thought underlying what I want to say, you will yourselves discover gradually from the general world-conception of Spiritual Science. One can hardly present the whole foundation of the Threefold Commonwealth in each single lecture. But today, in order to obtain a deeper view, we will consider from the inside, as it were, that which confronts us outwardly as the necessity of threefolding the social organism.

It is really not difficult for one who has lived to some extent with spiritual-scientific conceptions to call up in himself a feeling for the profound differences between those three spheres of life into which it is our intention that the social organism should be divided. As soon as one realizes that the Threefold Commonwealth is something to be taken very seriously, there develops in one's feelings the possibility of strongly differentiating among the three spheres. They are already fairly well known to you. First, that sphere of life which we call the spiritual life, in so far as it manifests itself or has form in what we call the physical world — thus, the entire field of the so-called (I must use a paradox) physical-spiritual life. You know of course what we have to understand by that. It embraces everything that is connected with men's individual faculties and talents. As we shall see directly the spiritual life is much more comprehensive for us than for a person of materialistic mind. We think of the spiritual life as much more material than the materialistic person does, in so far as we speak of the physical-spiritual life. That fact is ingrained already in my lectures. One can only understand the spiritual life if one starts with the realization that all material life is really concretely saturated by the spiritual: so that for us there is never a purely material something; that which reveals itself through the medium of matter is always according to its inner being also — I say also — a spiritual something. Art, science, conceptions of right, the ethical impulses of mankind — all these things, roughly speaking, come within the boundaries of the spiritual life. Above all, It includes everything that belongs to the cultivation of individual talents, thus the whole field of education and individual training.

Next, it is important to distinguish something which is connected in a certain way with the physical-spiritual life but which nevertheless is fundamentally different. That is, everything that one can described as rights-life, political life, state life. Naturally one must employ all one's powers of perception here to see the important distinction, otherwise one will make the mistake of thinking that the rights-life is practically the same as the sense of right. But we who are accustomed to careful discrimination must distinguish between phases of ideas of right, between — if I may so express myself — the being-inspired with ideas of right, and right as it is applied in the outer world. We will speak more fully about all these things directly.

The third sphere is the one you can most easily distinguish from the other two, the economic life.

Now, as we have said, man stands in an entirely different relation to each one of these three spheres of life. If you try with a healthy feeling to understand what the physical-spiritual life is, you will feel (try to lead your soul-faculties of perception in the direction I have indicated) that anything rooted in any degree in man's individual talents, individual faculties, leads into the innermost part of human nature, springs from the very depths of human nature. Now if one proceeds quite scientifically in the work of perceiving, then one experiences everything that comes to expression in art and science, in the impulses of education, as a psychic-spiritual something that lives and works in us when we surrender to its activity, in such a way that we can only experience it properly if we withdraw somewhat from the outer world. Certainly we must give expression to it in the outer world; but that is different from experiencing it inwardly: we cannot as men get a true conception of that something that manifests itself in art and science, in educational impulses — we cannot grasp it inwardly, unless we are able to withdraw a little from life. One does not need, of course, to withdraw to a hermit's cell: One can be taking a walk, as far as that matters; but one must withdraw into one's self, into one's soul-life — one must live in oneself. That fact becomes apparent to the human soul as soon as it cultivates the most simple feeling for the physical-spiritual. Spiritual Science must express it in these words: the physical-spiritual life is lived in such a way by our human soul that in unfolding it we do not entirely depend upon our body. In this respect, Spiritual Science — as you can gather from everything that Spiritual Science has already disclosed — takes the very opposite stand to the materialistic analysis of the human being which nurses the delusion that when one creates within oneself something that belongs to the physical-spiritual life, one accomplishes this creation entirely through the instrument of the brain, the nervous system, etc.. We know that is not true. We know that an independent inner life must be present in man in order that manifestations of this physical-spiritual life may be possible. Something is present in man in this physical-spiritual life without there being any corresponding physical manifestation in the physical body; something transpires solely within the spiritual-psychic being of man.

It is different when we manifest those life impulses which we desire to place on a democratic basis in our Threefold Commonwealth, to which every man gives expression in relation to all other men. They appear when men allow themselves to be instruments of their bodily nature in order to unite with each other. Not theoretical ideas of right, but impulses of right for life; not inner ethical ideas, but ethical impulses for life that are active among men and that are manifested in the way men meet one another, work with one another, in the way men exchange their experiences with one another. Those Rights-impulses are only present when men do business with one another, when men turn their bodily outer nature to one another, when they communicate with one another, see and live with one another in mutual experiences — in short, they can only be cultivated amid the vicissitudes of human intercourse. With respect to everything that is cultivated on the basis of our individual talents, that is, with respect to what in the sense of the above is independent of our body, we live as individual men, each one a separate personality, an entity. Except for slight distinctions that arise through differences in race and people, but which are a small matter as compared with the differences in men caused by individual talents and abilities (if one has any perceptive organ one must know that) — with that exception, we are equal as men with respect to our outer physical humanness, through which we meet men as men; through which we express ethical impulses, impulses of right. We are equal here as men in the physical world precisely through the sameness of our human body simply through the fact that we all have a human face. This fact makes us develop for ourselves, as outer physical man, impulses of right, ethical impulses, on a democratic basis — it makes us equal in this sphere. We are different from one another in our individual talents, which belong to our inner nature.

With respect to the third, the economic sphere: truly one does not need to adopt a false asceticism (it is certainly contrary to the prevailing tendency of our day, that is, in the West) in order to perceive how the economic life allows men to be submerged, as it were, here in the physical world, in a stream of life in which, to a certain degree, they are lost as men. Do you not feel,

my dear friends, that in economic life you are immersed in something that does not allow you to be so fully man as in the rights- or state-life? And it is so in still greater contrast to the life that flows out of your individual talents, out of the individual talents of all mankind. Without, as I said, adopting a false ascetic attitude, one feels with respect to the economic life that we cease to be complete men when we engage in economic activity. We are obliged to pay tribute to that part of us which is sub-human when we concern ourselves with economic life. (We have the same processes of economic life, that is, production, circulation, and consumption of commodities in spiritual production that grows out of economic life and has the same character as the circulation of commodities — and we have all of that life because, so to say, we are men and not animals. When its economic aspect comes into consideration, spiritual production has the same character as any economic activity concerned with material goods. The material goods are necessary to satisfy our bodily needs; also, spiritual, activity within the economic life — dentistry, for instance, and the like — in the end it leads to this, that through an exchange of commodities the dentist, etc., is able to live physically within the economic life.) In all events, economic life is always connected with physical life, and that brings us into a certain relation with animal life, even though it is on the human plane. It submerges us in experiences which we have instinctively together with the animals. There you have as a beginning a simple healthy feeling for the different relations an individual man has to these three spheres of life.

Now let us approach the subject in a more deeply spiritual-scientific way. Spiritual Science must first of all observe the periods of human life, the evolution of human life between birth, or conception, and death. Whoever allows himself the possibility of perceiving the course of human life will be strongly impressed by the way in which everything that partakes of the nature of a man's individual faculties is unmistakably announced during the early days of childhood. To one who has a spiritual eye for it and who acknowledges his life experience, the special form of the child soul is easily perceptible. In what develops during the first three life-periods, from the 1st to the 7th year, the 7th to the 14th, and the 14th to the 21st year, there lies the prophecy, as from an inner elementary force, of the man's future individual gifts. And not only what we are accustomed to think of as a man's individual gifts, but connected with that, whether he will be able to do much or little muscular work. That is where we are obliged to extend the spiritual further into the material than materialistic thinkers do. Through spiritual vision we see a strong connection between the nature of a man's muscular system and his individual talents. For one who can observe the human being, everything is connected with the development of the human head. Even a man's outer form, whether he has strong legs or weak legs, whether he can run much: all that is seen by one who has developed his spiritual vision from the man's head, precisely from his head. Whether a man is skillful or clumsy, one sees from his head. These so-called physical abilities of man, which are closely connected with his fitness for outer physical, manual work, are connected with the form of his head. Now you know what I have often told you about the shape of the head, basing my remarks on the most varied fundamental facts: everything that comes into shape in the human head, that gives the human head its conformation, its form, points to something before birth, to that which man brings through birth into physical life from out of the spiritual worlds — from the spiritual world itself or from previous incarnations on the earth. And so, when one sees the connection between all human individual talents, either spiritual or manual, and the formation of the human head, then one is led further in one's seeing, and one is able to trace back everything that comes from man's individual talents to his life before birth. That, you see, is what gives the spiritual-scientist such important enlightenment as to what physical-spiritual life is. Physical-spiritual life, my dear friends, is here in the physical world because we as men bring something with us at birth. Physical-spiritual life, in the sense in which I have spoken of it today, does not arise out of this physical world: all of it arises out of impulses which we bring from the spiritual world through birth into physical existence. Inasmuch as we bring into physical existence echoes of a supersensible existence, we create in human society here in the physical world that which comprises the physical-spiritual life. There would be no

art, no science — at the most, in science, a recording of experiments — there would be no impulse for education, no education of children at all, if we did not bring impulses through birth into physical life out of our life previous to birth. That, then, is one thing.

Now let take everything in my book Theosophy, or in Occult Science, that describes the supersensible world. Take especially what is said in those books about the relation that exists between human souls when they are disembodied, when they are living between death and a new birth. You know that we have to speak of quite other relations existing between souls there than those which exist here in the physical world. You remember how I described what is experienced there from soul to soul as being reflected here in shadowy images. You remember the description in Theosophy of life in the soul-world: when I wanted to describe the disembodied life of the supersensible world between death and a new birth I had to speak of certain reciprocal influences, of soul forces and astral forces, that do not exist in the physical world. There, souls have an inner relation to one another, a relation of soul to soul which is called out by the inner force of the soul itself. Now if one is thoroughly imbued with the idea of what relation exists in the supersensible world between souls, if one fixes one's vision upon the relation quite objectively, then one makes a remarkable discovery if one draws a comparison to it in the right way. You know it depends very much on the tendency of such inner activity as this, whether one is led to knowledge of the supersensible world, or even to knowledge of the connections between the supersensible world and the sense world. If one turns directly to the Rights-, State-, or political life, one finds that there is no greater contrast to that particular form of supersensible life than the political or Rights-life here on the physical plane. They are the two great opposites, my dear friends, that one experiences when one really learns to know the supersensible life. Supersensible life has nothing at all that can be regulated by laws of right or outer ethical impulses; there, everything is regulated through inner soul impulses. It is just the opposite here in the physical world where everywhere state-life has to be established because, through birth into the physical world, we lose those deep impulses that are alive in the soul in the supersensible world and that comprise the relations there between souls. Here we make laws of right that will create what must be created: relations of Right — because man has lost that which in the supersensible world creates the relation between souls. Those are the two opposite poles: supersensible relation of soul to soul, and state-relation here on the physical plane.

In the physical-spiritual cultural life we carry from man to man something that stays with us after birth as a reflection from the supersensible world. We spread, as it were, a lustre over life here by letting in the light from the supersensible world, and seeking to reflect it here in art, science, and education. It is quite different with the Rights life: we have to establish that on the physical earth as a substitute for what we loss of supersensible relations when we enter through birth into physical existence. That gives you an idea, too, of what certain religious documents mean (and you know how far religious documents are always penetrated by this or that absolute truth) when they speak of the authorized “Kingdom of this world”. They mean by that, that the state should not presume to any right to control that which man brings with him as a reflection of the supersensible world when he comes through birth into the physical world. It should confine itself to ruling the kingdom of Rights, which is the life we need here because by our physical birth we have lost the impulses of the spiritual world. The task of the state life is to create what is necessary for human intercourse in the physical world. It has meaning only for our life between birth and death.

Let us look at the third, the economic life. Something must be said about it that is quite paradoxical: expressing it crudely, we are submerged in a sub-humanness by engaging in an economic life. At the same time, however, something is going on in our soul when we concern ourselves with the subhuman. And that you can experience. Think how very actively you must struggle within yourselves when you give yourselves up to spiritual culture; and on the other hand, how thoughtless men can be in purely economic life, often following mere impulses and instincts. Economic activity proceeds, on the whole, without much truly active inner thought.

And in that case, we sink into a subhumanness. Our soul stays hidden in the background. Spiritual Science would say that our body is more exerted when we are engaged in a material activity than one ordinarily believes. Consider the end members of the economic process, eating and drinking: we can realize that there is not a complete balance there between bodily and spiritual activity, that the body outweighs the spiritual-psychic in activity. But then this spiritual-psychic carries on a strong unconscious activity. And within this unconscious activity a seed is hidden. We carry this seed through the gate of death. The soul can rest, as it were, when we are busy with economic life; but, in what appears to outer consciousness as rest, a seed is developing which we carry through the gate of death. And if we cultivate brotherliness in economic life, as I always describe it, then we carry a good seed through the gate of death — precisely by virtue of what we cultivate in our relations with men in the economic life. It may seem materialistic to you when I say: precisely in the brotherliness of economic life man is planting the seed in his soul for his life after death; in his spiritual culture he is spending his inheritance from his life before birth. It may appear materialistic to you, but it is true, simply true to the spiritual-scientific investigator. However materialistic this may seem to you it is true when I say: when you are submerged in animalness take care of your humanness, for you are planting supersensible seeds for the time after death.

Man is a threefold being. He has in the first place an inheritance from the time before birth; then, he evolves something here that has value only for the time between birth and death; finally, he develops here in the physical world something by which he links his physical life here with life after death. That which is manifested here as the lustre of life and the promise and interest of life, in the physical-spiritual culture, is an inheritance from the spiritual world that we bring with us into this physical world. In possessing this spiritual wealth we show ourselves as belonging to the spiritual world; we bring into the physical world a reflection of the supersensible world through which we passed before our conception and birth.

You see, abstract science, even abstract philosophy, talks — naturally always in abstractions. They talk about proving the eternity of substance, how the human substance present at birth remains and then lasts on through death. Such proofs can never be gained out of mere thinking. The philosophers have always sought them, but no proof has ever held against inner logical knowing, because the thing simply is not so. Something much more spiritual is connected with immortality. Nothing at all material, much less anything substantial, is present in any such way. What is present after death is consciousness: consciousness that looks back into this world. That is what we have to consider when we are considering immortality. We must be much less materialistic than the abstract philosophers themselves when we talk of these higher things. It is like this: we use up what I have characterized as a reflection of the supersensible world which we reveal as the ornament, the polished surface of life here — we use that up and must make here, during our life, a new link for the chain of our eternal existence to carry through death. Anyone who only thinks of what goes forward in this life must conclude, if he is consistent, that the thread wears out; only when he knows that he makes here a new part of the chain that goes out beyond death, only then has he come to immortality.

And so man is this threefold being. He cultivates talents in himself that bring a reflection of the supersensible world into this life. He develops a life that forms the bridge between life before death and life after death that expresses itself in all that which has its roots only in the time between birth and death, the outward Rights, or State-impulses, etc. And in that he is submerged in economic life and is able to plant something moral in this economic life — brotherliness — he develops the seed for his life after death. That is the threefold man.

Now think of this threefold man in such a phase of evolution ever since the 15th century that he must now cultivate consciously everything that formerly was instinctive. For that reason it is necessary today that his outer social life should afford him the opportunity of standing with his threefold human nature in a threefold organism. We unite in ourselves three very distinct members of one being: the pre-birthly, the one that is active on the earth, and the after-death

member; therefore, we can only stand in the social organism properly in three parts. Otherwise we come as conscious men into disharmony with the rest of the world; and we will come into more and more disharmony unless we will consider shaping this world that lies around us into a threefold social organism.

There, you see, you have the question from the inside. I am trying to show how spiritual-scientific research points out the way to the threefold social organism: how it must be wrested out of human nature itself.

Many persons have thoughts about what I have evolved. But in open lectures and also on other occasions I have always warned you that these thoughts to which I give expression should not be confused with the thoughts of the elder Schäffle in his book On the Structure of the Social Organism, or with the dilettantism of Merrey's most recent book Concerning World-mutations, and similar works. The spiritual scientist cannot be concerned with mere play of analogy such as these books offer; it is at most unfruitful. What I should like when speaking about the social organism is that men should train their thinking.

The general training of thought today is not even adequate for natural science to be able to grasp facts that I investigated at 35, and that I presented in my book Riddles of the Soul, showing that a human being consists of three members: nerve-sense life, rhythmic life, and metabolic life. The nerve-sense life can also be called the head life; the rhythmic life can be called the breathing life, or blood life; and the metabolic life includes all the rest of the organism as a kind of structure. Just as this human organism consists of three members, each centered in itself, so in the social organism each of the three members works for the whole because of the very fact that it is centered in itself. The physiology and biology of today believe that man is a centralized, unified being. That is not true. Even in regard to his communication with the outer world, man is a threefold being: the head life is in independent connection with the outer world through the senses; the breathing life is connected with the outer world through the air; the metabolic life is in connection with the outer world through independent outlets. The social organism also must be threefold, with each part centered in itself. Just as the head cannot breathe but nevertheless receives what is communicated by the breathing through the rhythmic system, so the social organism should not itself develop a Rights-life, but should receive rights from its State-member.

However, I said that one must not mistake what is presented here for a mere play of analogy, such as arises when one works from all kinds of hypotheses. Spiritual Science is real investigation and does not stop short at appearances. People believe that a Spiritual Scientist just thinks something out. Before one is a real spiritual investigator one has to learn to observe the spiritual world. One has to give up thinking; that has value only for the physical world. Naturally one does not give it up for the whole of life, only for spiritual research.

I have told you one usually comes to things upside down if one sets out to describe the spiritual world by using analogies from the sense world. Spiritual research shows, for instance, that the earth is really an organism; that what geology and mineralogy find is only a bone system; that the earth is living, it sleeps and wakes like man. But one cannot go farther in the analogy. If ordinarily you ask a man: When is the earth awake and when is it asleep? he will undoubtedly answer: The earth is awake in summer and asleep in winter. And that is the opposite of what is actually the truth. The truth is, the earth is asleep in summer and awake in winter. Naturally one only finds that out if one actually investigates in the spiritual world. That is the puzzle that makes spiritual research so liable to error — the fact that when one goes with some inquiry from the physical into the spiritual world one gets perhaps the very opposite of the physical fact, or perhaps quarter-truths. One has to investigate every single case.

So it is also with the surface analogy that people draw between the three members of the human organism and the three members of the social organism. What will a man say using this

analogy? He has to say: On the outside is a spiritual life, art, science. He will draw a parallel between that and the human head system, the nerve-sense-life. How could he do otherwise? Then, when he establishes that, he will compare the metabolic life, to which I have referred in my Riddles of the Soul as the most material, with economic life. Nothing could be more upside down than that. And nothing whatever is accomplished by looking at it in that way. One must give up toying with analogies if one wants to reach the truth. People outside of Spiritual Science believe that these ideas have been obtained by a thought game of analogies. That is the greatest illusion. It is to no purpose to correspond outer physical-spiritual life with the head system. It is of no purpose to relate economic life to the metabolic system. All that is of no avail if one wants to fathom the question.

When one makes a real investigation one gets a very paradoxical result. Comparing the social organism to the human organism one comes to the truth only if one stands upside down in the social organism. One must compare economic life with the nerve-sense-life, state-life with the rhythmic system, and physical-spiritual life with the metabolic system, for the laws obtaining in them are similar. That which is present in economic life as natural conditions is of exactly the same significance for the social organism as are for man the individual talents that he brings with him at birth. As man in his individual life is dependent upon what he brings into life with him, so the economic organism is dependent upon what Nature bequeaths it in the way of existing conditions. The preliminary natural conditions of economic life — land, etc. — are the same as the individual talents that man brings into individual life. How much coal, how much metal is in the earth, whether land is fertile or not are, as it were, the talents of the social organism. And as man's metabolic system is related to the human organism and its functions, human spiritual production is related to the social organism. The social organism eats and drinks what we give it in the form of art, science, technical ideas, etc. That is its nourishment. That is its metabolism. A country that has unfavorable natural conditions for its economic life is like a man who is poorly gifted. And a country in which the people produce nothing in the way of art, science, or technical ideas is like a man who must go hungry because he has nothing to eat. That is the reality, the truth! The social organism is our angry spiritual child. And the natural conditions of the social organism are its capacities, its talents. A comparison of the spiritual life with the human head system has meaning, perhaps, for one who is playing with analogies; but one reaches the correct and helpful truth only if one knows that the laws stand as I have presented them. One can know that these are the laws of human metabolism; but one must direct the same thinking to them as one directs to the social organism and then one easily gets a larger result. To tamper with spiritual things without such guiding threads is extraordinarily difficult and wearisome. Because of the fact that today analogies are often merely toyed with, on account of which there is a prejudice against this drawing of parallels between the social and the human organism, I have only just touched upon it in my book, but I tried at least to indicate it because it can be a great help to those who think healthily about it.

And so you see that today men are in a peculiar position. Natural science, which has made this great progress which has so influenced men's minds — even though it is not conscious of social thinking — orientates itself in the direction of natural science. This Natural Science is not capable of analyzing man correctly. For instance; it says the greatest nonsense about feeling being transmitted through the nervous system. That is pure nonsense. Feeling is transmitted directly through the breathing system, the rhythmic system, and thought through the nerve-sense-system. And the will is made possible through the metabolic system, not through the nervous system in any elementary way. The thought of willing is transmitted through the nervous system. Only when you have, as men, a real consciousness of willing does the nervous system take any part. When you think along with your willing, then the nervous system is concerned in it. It is because this is not known that the physiology and anatomy of today have made that frightful error of distinguishing between sensory nerves and motor nerves. There is no greater falsity than this differentiation of sensory and motor nerves in the human body. The anatomists are always in a dilemma when they get to their chapter on nerves, and they don't get out of it. They

are in a frightful dilemma because there is no difference anatomically between these two kinds of nerves. It is pure speculation. And everything that is deduced by examining the nerves is absolutely without support. The reason that the motor nerves are not distinguishable from the sensory nerves is that there aren't any motor nerves there. The muscles are set in motion by the metabolic system. And as you perceive the outer world through the senses with the so-called sensory nerves, with other nerves you perceive your own movements, your muscular movements. The Physiology of today is wrong when it calls them motor nerves. Frightful mistakes such as this exist in science and corrupt what goes into the popular consciousness — and they have a much more corrupt influence than one would ordinarily think.

Thus Natural Science is not so far advanced as to perceive this threefold man. We can wait for theoretical views of Natural Science to become popular; a year sooner or later will not affect men's happiness. But the thinking does not exist for comprehending this threefold man. The same quality of thinking must however exist to comprehend the threefold nature of the social organism. And there the thing is serious. We are today at the point of time when it must be comprehended. Therefore a change of thought, a new method of thinking, is essential — not only for the simple man, but truly, most of all for the learned man. Simple men at least know nothing about all those things that have been advanced in natural science in order unconsciously to conceal man's threefold nature. But the learned men are stuck full of all those concepts that today make this threefolding seem like nonsense. To the physiologist of today it is pure folderol. If one tells him that there are no motor nerves and that feelings are not transmitted in the same way as thoughts — through the nervous system — but only the thought connected with a feeling, in other words the consciousness of it, not the feeling as such, he will object strenuously. His objections are well known. Men can naturally say: Now look, you perceive music; you perceive that through your senses. No, experience of music is much more complicated than that. It is like this: The breathing rhythm meets with the sense perception in our brain, and in the contact of the breathing rhythm with the outer sense perception arises the musical-aesthetic experience. Even there, the fundamental thing is in the rhythmic system. And what brings this fundamental thing to consciousness is in the nervous system.

However, this all shows you, my dear friends, that in regard to many things we are living in a time of transition. Every period is indeed a transition from the past to the future. That is so if one speaks abstractly and one can see that every period is more or less a time of transition. I want rather to say in what particular respect our time is a transition. It is a time of very important inner transition, in regard to important inner human impulses. To men capable of perception this shows itself clearly in a certain way. Men today are not very apt to consider incidental symptoms with sufficient earnestness.

I want to tell you of a purely spiritual-scientific perception. Naturally I can as little prove this perception to you as the man who has seen a wallfish can prove to you that it exists. He can only tell you about it. When one has developed one's power of spiritual vision so far as to be able to have communication with human souls that are evolving between death and a new birth, then one makes indeed very surprising discoveries. This communication can only be had in thought; and when we think here in the physical body some element of speech is always present in our thoughts. Something of speech always vibrates with the thoughts. We think in words. I had the experience once of declaring energetically: "I am fully conscious of the fact that I can think without words resounding simultaneously", and of having Hartmann answer: "That is nonsense! That is not possible; man cannot think unless he thinks in words". Thus there are very spiritual philosophers who do not believe that one can think without an inner forming of words. One can. But in ordinary everyday thinking man thinks in words, especially when he would develop some spiritual intercourse with the dead. For you know intercourse with the dead cannot be carried on in abstractions — any more than we can think in blue. It has to be concrete, this intercourse with the dead. That is why I have said: definite pictures that are formed very concretely reach the dead, but not abstract thoughts. Because this is so we are especially apt to let speech

sound inwardly in our thought communication with the dead. Then we make the most peculiar discovery (you may believe it or not, but it is a fact) that, for instance, the dead do not hear substantives. Substantives are like holes in our sentences when we communicate with the dead.

Adjectives are better, but still very weak; but verbs, words of activity, is what their understanding grasps. One learns that slowly at first. One cannot think why so much of the communication goes badly, then one gradually realizes that it is the nouns. One cannot use many nouns. And you see one comes to realize this: that in using words of activity, verbs, one cannot help but be within the words oneself. There is something personal in verbs — one lives in the activity, while a noun always becomes something quite abstract.

Therein lies the basis of the symptom of which I wanted to speak. You see that speech is something that unites us with the supersensible world only in a very limited measure; and the fact that the whole tendency of speech is more and more toward substantives brings about the possibility of our separating ourselves from the spiritual world. The more we think in substantives the more we break our connection with the spiritual world. I only wanted this fact to indicate to you that speech has a great significance for our supersensible life — a fundamental significance. But speech evolves within human evolution itself. And the characteristic of the evolution of speech is that it brings men more and more to abstractions, that it takes them farther and farther away from living, inner thought-life. You can become aware of this outwardly by asking yourselves, How are the Western languages formed as compared to the Eastern? Take the language that outwardly, on the physical plane, has progressed the furthest — the English language. It almost spends itself in words — it has least thought content. That is the progress of speech from East to West. That is an important distinction to make in connection with social folk-life.

Now there is a man of our time who has developed great acuteness in his observation of human speech. This man is so clever that already he is stupid again. There is, in other words, a degree of cleverness where one begins again to be a bit stupid in the face of colossal cleverness. It is true. One may have a great respect for this cleverness, but one should not value it too highly in face of the corresponding truth. This man is Fritz Mauthner, who has out-Kanted Kant in his *Critique of Speech*, and also in his *Dictionary*: observations, however, made undeniably out of the impulses of the time. Mauthner has reached something quite definite that must especially strike the spiritual-scientist: it is this: that in reality human inner soul-activity has, as it were, three stages. The first is ordinary sense perception as it is reflected in art. Mauthner believes in this as something that is real, something that is a reality. Now through sense perception one can arouse inner experiences that lead over into the supersensible; Fritz Mauthner allows such inner experience — he calls it “Mystic experience,” “religious experience.” Beautiful; but he says: When man has this mystic experience he can only be dreaming. One is permitted to dream, but one is outside of reality then. Mauthner altogether doubts the possibility of reaching reality then — the only reality to him is sense perception. At most, art can reach it. As soon as one gets so far away from sense perception as to be experiencing something in mystic religious life, then one is merely dreaming about reality — one has already let reality go by. And then one can go still further, according to Mauthner.

He comes to all these convictions through a consideration of speech. He makes an analysis, a criticism of speech, especially in his philosophical *Dictionary*. It makes terrible reading. I have already on another occasion drawn your attention to the torture one undergoes reading these articles — and they go all the way from A to Z. One begins to read one or another of the articles. Something is said, then another sentence in which what has just been said is just a little bit qualified. Then a third sentence, and that which was just qualified is again qualified, so that one comes back a little to the first sentence again. One hedges around and around and around, and in the end one has got nothing, even though one has read the whole article to the end. The article entitled “Christianity” is awful. A frightful torture. But it is proper, in Mauthner's sense, that it should be so. Mauthner thinks that, and he really condemns his reader to the torture; he has

gone through it himself. He does not believe that man is capable, when he wants to know something, of getting anything else than just such hedging. He is an absolute skeptic. He finds nowhere in speech any other content than the speech itself. It has only an incidental value to him.

And so to him, inner mystic experience is only a dream. As soon as one gets out of speech one is inwardly dreaming. But according to Mauthner there is a third stage: one can believe that one is thinking, but one is only speaking inwardly. Whether one uses this or that language, the language, the words, originated once in outer sense things. I have spoken to you before of the various opinions of learned men of how speech originated. You know that their opinions can be divided into two main classes: the Bimbam theory and the Wan-wan theory (those are the technical terms). Now Mauthner finds that everything has evolved from outer sense perception; real thoughts do not exist for man. In science he strives for real thoughts, then he reaches the third stage. But he does not succeed there in knowing anything real. In mysticism he is still dreaming; when he is in search of thought reality, for instance to natural laws, then he is no longer dreaming — then he is fast asleep. Therefore for Mauthner all science is *Docta ignorantia* (learned ignorance). Those are his three stages.

Now my dear friends, as I told you, one can have a certain respect for such observation for it is not altogether incorrect — that is, not incorrect for today. Something to which mankind tends today has been felt correctly by Mauthner. It is this: when the man of today wants to come to mysticism it is something quite different than with men formerly. The man of earlier times was still inwardly bound up with reality. The man of today has not that possibility; as a mystic he really is dreaming. And the natural laws that man finds today — well, one cannot quite endorse such crude points of view as those of certain theorizers who have analyzed the matter similarly to Mauthner, as for example the French thinker Boutroux, or Ernst Mach. But nevertheless one must say: if one investigates the content of the so-called natural laws today there are fundamentally no thoughts there; one only believes they are thoughts; they are only combinations of facts. They are really only records. These things have been noticed by individuals, Mach, for example. Mauthner has observed thoroughly — therefore he speaks of *Docta ignorantia*, of a learned unknowing, of an ignorant learnedness. Yes, as human evolution is today, that is quite true. Today, in mysticism and in science alike, man has become sterile. Only, in his pride, he is not yet aware of it as having any significance. But that is not generally characteristic of humanity. Mauthner and the others believe that it is because in reality they do not consider human evolution; they think: as the soul is today, so it was always. But really, it is only a characteristic of the present time. Their observation only has significance for the soul life of today; we do come to dreaming and to learned ignorance today, when we want to rise in these stages.

But one must not conclude that human nature is such that it is obliged to sink either into mystic dreaming or into learned ignorance (as those do who think as Mauthner does). One must come to this conclusion: what the ancients reached in old ways must therefore be found now in new ways. That means, we must seek a new mysticism, we must not get into old mysticism. This new mysticism is sought in Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment. We must rise to this new Imagination, to a new Inspiration, but we must rise by new methods. I have elaborated that in my book Riddles of Humanity. Because we dream in mysticism and sleep in science the necessity is before us today of waking up. Therefore I have described the phenomenon of present day knowledge in this book as an "awakening". We must put in the place of mystic dreams a wide-awake Imagination, in the place of *Docta ignorantia*, Inspiration, in the sense in which I have talked of it in my book Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment. We live today in a transition period in respect to the human soul; we must evolve out of the deepest foundation of this human soul active power that leads to the spiritual. We will not find our way through the chaos of the present age unless we develop the will to evolve active inner soul powers. The spiritualists do the opposite. They perceive that nothing springs up unconsciously from

within, and so they allow themselves to project spirits in outer manifestation, outer sense vision.

And a tragic phenomenon makes its appearance in the present day. We have the experience today of seeing men, who a short time ago still believed that materialism could satisfy their souls, become alarmed in their advancing years about materialism. That is nothing else than what the healthy soul should feel, in spite of the biology of today, or the sociology: a smell of decay, a smell of the corpse of one's soul, that one only prevents by an inner soul activity. Many do not want that activity today. And therefore the tragedy of men growing old who will not have anything to do with spiritual scientific research and who go back to Catholicism. That allows the soul to remain passive, and gives it something that it can believe is a spiritual content. It is a great danger.

That points from another angle to the transition humanity is making in the present age. Quite secretly, the human soul is going through an important stage of development. And with this transition, through an important stage of development which is intimately connected with the necessity of learning to think anew in many other respects concerning man. Read how the individual man, when entering the supersensible world, begins to divide into three parts. Read it in Knowledge of the Higher Worlds. Thinking, feeling and willing here in the sense world are fused as the natural condition for man. Read the chapter on the "Guardian of the Threshold": thinking, feeling, and willing become separate from one another when one gets into the supersensible world. Mankind is going through that process today, secretly, in the subconscious. A threshold is being crossed there. Man divides inwardly into a threefold man in a different way than was formerly the case. Observation of this passing of men over a certain threshold teaches one that the threefolding of the social organism is dictated to us out of the spiritual foundations of existence itself. If in the future we want to find a picture of ourselves in the outside world so that we shall agree with it, then we shall have had to threefold the social organism.

You see the signs that spiritual science gives for the Threefold Commonwealth. But I again emphasize the point: once the Threefold Commonwealth is found it can, like all occult truths, be comprehended by a healthy human understanding. To find it, spiritual scientific research is necessary; but once it is found, healthy human, understanding proclaims its truth. That is also something that we must recall at every opportunity.

I have tried today to give you a deeper consideration of what, in service to our time, must be said today about the Threefold Commonwealth. Next Sunday we will extend this consideration and conclude it — and perhaps bring it to full inner completeness.