



# Michaelmas and the Soul-Forces of the Human Being<sup>1</sup>

by

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When anthroposophy is discussed in certain circles today, one of the many misstatements made about it is that it is intellectualistic, that it appeals too predominantly to the scientific mind, and that it does not sufficiently consider the needs of the human soul (Gemüt).

The human Gemüt has indeed been wholly excluded from the domain of cognition by the intellectualistic development of civilization in the last three or four centuries. It is true that today one never tires of insisting that man cannot stop short at what the dry, matter-of-fact intellect can comprehend. Nevertheless, when it is a case of acquiring knowledge, people depend exclusively upon this intellect. On the other hand, it is constantly being emphasized that the human Gemüt ought to come into its own again — yet it is not given the chance to do so. It is denied the opportunity of making any contact whatever with the cosmic enigmas, and its sphere of action is limited to the most intimate concerns of men, to matters that are decided only in the most personal way.

Today we shall discuss first in what I might call a sort of historical retrospect about how, in earlier periods of human evolution, this Gemüt was granted a voice in the search for knowledge, when it was permitted to conjure up grandiose and mighty images before the human soul, intended to illuminate man's efforts of realizing his incorporation into the body of world events, into the cosmos, and his participation in the changing times. In those days when the human Gemüt was still allowed to contribute its share in the matter of world views, these images really constituted the most important element of them. They represented the vast, comprehensive cosmic connections and assigned man his position in them.

1. Formerly: *Anthroposophy and the Human Gemüt* by Rudolf Steiner, September 1923, Vienna.

In order to create a basis for further study of the human Gemüt from the viewpoint of anthroposophy, I should like to present to you today one of those grandiose, majestic images that formerly were intended to function as I have indicated. It is at the same time one of those images especially fitted, at present, to be brought before men's souls in a new manner, with which we shall also deal. I should like to talk to you about that image with which you are all familiar, but whose significance for human consciousness has gradually partly faded, partly suffered through misconception: I refer to the image of the conflict, the battle, of Michael with the Dragon. Many people are still deeply affected by it, but its more profound content is either dim or misunderstood. At best it makes no such close contact with the human Gemüt as was once the case, even as late as the 18th century. People of today have no conception of the changes that have taken place in this respect, of how great a proportion of what so-called clever people call fantastic visions constituted the most serious elements of the ancient world views. This has been preeminently the case with the image of Michael's combat with the Dragon.

Nowadays, when a man reflects upon his development on the earth, a materialist world view inclines him to trace his relatively more perfect human form back to less perfect ones, farther and farther back to physical-animal forebears. In this way one really moves away from present-day man who is able to experience his own being in an inner, psycho-spiritual way, and arrives at far more material creatures from whom man is supposed to have descended — creatures that stood much closer to material existence. People assume that matter has gradually developed upward to the point where it experiences spirit. That was not the view in comparatively recent times: It was really the exact opposite.

Even as late as the 18th century, when those who had not been infected by the materialistic viewpoint and frame of mind — there were not yet many who were so infected — cast their inner gaze back to prehistoric mankind, they looked upon their ancestors not as beings less human than themselves but as beings more spiritual. They beheld beings in whom spirituality was so inherent that they did not assume physical bodies in the sense that people on earth do today. Incidentally, the earth did not even exist then. They beheld beings living in a higher, more spiritual way and having — to express it crudely — a body of much finer, more spiritual substance. To that sphere one did not assign beings like present-day men but more exalted ones — beings having at most an etheric body, not a physical one. Such, approximately, were our ancestors as people then conceived them.

People used to look back at a time when there were not so-called higher animals either, when at most there were animals whose descendants of the jelly-fish kind live in the oceans of today. On what was the ancestor of our earth, they represented, so to speak, the animal kingdom, the plane below that of man; and above the latter was the kingdom embracing only beings with at most an etheric body. What I enumerated in my *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 man.

These beings — Angeloi, Archangeloi, and Archai — in the stage of their evolution of that time, were not destined to be free beings in the sense in which today we speak of freedom in connection with man. The will of these beings was not experienced by them in such a way as to give them that singular feeling we express by the phrase: to desire something arbitrarily. These beings desired nothing arbitrarily; they willed what flowed into their being as divine will; 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 — 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 mankind was as follows: In that ancient epoch the time had not yet arrived in which beings could develop who would be conscious of the feeling of freedom. The divine-spiritual world-order had postponed that moment to a later epoch, when a number of those spirits, identified with the divine will, were, in a sense, to receive a free will of their own. That was to occur when the right time had come in world evolution. — It is not my purpose to corroborate today from the anthroposophical viewpoint what I have been characterizing; that will be done in the next lectures. Today I am merely describing the conceptions occupying the most enlightened spirits even as late as the 18th century. I shall present them historically, for only by this method shall we arrive at a new view of the problem of reviving these conceptions in a different form.

But then — as these people saw it — among these spirits, whose real cosmic destiny was to remain identified with the will of the divine spirits, there arose a number of beings that wanted to disassociate their will, as it were, to emancipate it, from the divine will. 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 one of these beings, their leader, was conceived

of as the being taking 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 the beings of the hierarchy of the Angeloi, Archangeloi, and Archai were simply not adapted to a being destined to have a free will, emancipated from divine will, as described. Not until later in world evolution were such forms to come into being, namely, the human form. — But all this is conceived as happening in a period in which cosmic development of the human form was not yet possible; nor were the 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 not be an animal form like those destined to appear only later, nor could it be the form of an animal of that time, of the then prevalent softer matter, so to say. It could only be an animal form differing from any that would be possible in the physical world, yet resembling an animal by reason of representing a cosmic contradiction. And the only form that could be evolved out of what was possible at that time is the form of the Dragon. Naturally it was interpreted in various ways when painted or otherwise represented — more or less suitably, according to the inner imaginative cognition of the artist concerning what was possible at that time in a being that had developed a refractory will. But in any case, this form is not to be found among those that became possible in the animal scale up to man in the physical world; it had to remain a supersensible being. But 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, placed among the beings that could evolve in the course of physical development. And that is the story of “The Fall of the Dragon from Heaven to Earth.” It was Michael’s deed, this bestowing of a form that is supra-animalistic — supersensible, but intolerable in the supersensible realm — for although it is supersensible, it is incompatible with the realm of the supersensible where it existed before it rebelled.

Thus this 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 such 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. 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 him who is like an animal and yet not like an animal, 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, men of old saw the act of Michael, who remained in the realm of spirit in the form suitable to that realm.

Now the earth came into being, and with it, man; and it was intended that man should become, in a sense, a twofold being. With one part of his being, with his psycho-spiritual part, he was to reach up into what is called the heavenly, the supersensible world, and with the other, with the physical-etheric part, he was to belong to that nature which came into being as earth-nature, as a new cosmic body — the cosmic body to which the apostate spirit, the Adversary, was relegated. This is where man had to come into being. He was the being who, according to the primordial decree that underlies all, belongs in this world. Man belonged on the earth. The Dragon did not belong on the earth, but he had been transferred thither.

And now consider what man encountered on the earth, as he came into existence with the earth. He encountered what had developed as external nature out of previous nature kingdoms, tending toward and culminating in our present mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, up to his own physical form. That is what he encountered — in other words, what we are accustomed to call extra-human nature. What was this? It was, and still is today, the perpetuation of what was intended by the highest creative powers in the continuous plan for the world's evolution. That is why the human being, in experiencing it in his Gemüt, can look out upon external nature, upon the minerals and all that is connected with the mineral world, upon the wondrous crystal formations — also upon the mountains, the clouds, and all the other forms — and he beholds this outer nature in its condition of death, as it were, of not being alive. But he sees all this that is not alive as something that an earlier divine world discarded — just as the human corpse, though in a different significance, is discarded by the living man at death.

Although the aspect of the human corpse as it appears to us is not primarily anything that can impress us positively, yet that which, in a certain sense, is also a divine corpse, though on a higher plane, and which originated in the mineral

kingdom, may be regarded as the factor whose form and shape reflect the originally formless-living divinity. And what then comes into being as the higher kingdoms of nature can be regarded as a further reflection of what originally existed as the formless divine. So man can gaze upon the whole of nature and may feel that this extra-human nature is a mirror of the divine in the world. And after all, that is what nature is intended to give to the human Gemüt. Naïvely, and not through speculation, man must be able to feel joy and accord at the sight of this or that manifestation of nature, feel inner jubilation and enthusiasm when he experiences creative nature in its sprouting and blossoming. And his very unawareness of the cause of this elation, this enthusiasm, this overflowing joy in nature — that is what should evoke deep down in his heart the feeling that his Gemüt is so intimately related to this nature that he can say to himself — though in dim consciousness: All this the gods have taken out of themselves and established in the world as their mirror — the same gods from whom my Gemüt derived, from whom I myself sprang by a different way. — And all our inner elation and joy in nature, all that rises in 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 Divinity.

As you know, man's position in his evolution is such that he takes nature into himself — takes it in through nourishment, through breathing, and — though in a spiritual way — through perceiving it with his senses. In these three ways external nature enters into man, and it is this that makes him a twofold being. Through his psycho-spiritual being he is related to the beings of the higher hierarchies, but a part of his being he must form out of what he finds in nature. That he takes into himself; and by being received in him as nourishment, as the stimulus of breathing, and even in the more delicate etheric process of perception, it extends in him the processes of outer nature. This appears in him as instinct, passion and animal lust — as everything animalistic that rises out of the depths of his nature. Let us note that carefully. Out there we see wondrously formed crystals, mineral masses that tower into gigantic mountains, fresh mineral forms that flow as water over the earth in the most manifold ways. On a higher plane of formative force we have before us the burgeoning substance and nature of plants, the endless variety of animal forms, and finally the human physical form itself.

All that, living in outer nature, is a mirror of the Godhead. It stands there in its marvelous naïve innocence before the human Gemüt, just because it

mirrors the Godhead and is at bottom nothing but a pure reflection. Yet one must understand this reflection. Primarily it is not to be comprehended by the intellect, but only, as we shall hear in the next lectures, precisely by the Gemüt. But if man does understand it with his Gemüt — and, in the olden times of which I spoke, men did — he sees it as a mirror of the Godhead. — but then he turns to what lives in nature — in the salts, in plants, and in the parts of animals that enter his own body. And he observes what it is that sprouts in the innocent green of the plants and what is even still present in a naïve way in the animal body. All this he now perceives when he looks into himself: He sees it arising in him as passions, as bestial lusts, animal instincts; and he perceives what nature becomes in him.

That was the feeling still cherished by many of the most enlightened men even in the 18th century. They still felt vividly the difference between outer nature and what nature becomes after man has devoured, breathed, and perceived it. They felt intensely the difference between the naïve outer nature, perceptible to the senses, on the one hand, and the human, inwardly surging sensuality, on the other. This difference was still livingly clear to many men who in the 18th century, experienced nature and man and described them to their pupils, described how nature and man are involved in the conflict between Michael and the Dragon.

In considering that this radical contrast still occupied the souls of men in the 18th century — outer nature in its essential innocence, nature within man in its corruption — we must now recall the Dragon that Michael relegated to this world of nature because he found him unworthy to remain in the world of spirituality. Out there in the world of minerals, plants, even of animals, that Dragon, whose form is incompatible with nature, assumed none of the forms of nature beings. He assumed that 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 welling-up of a life of instincts in the physical human body. Thus many people as late as the 18th century said: All the Dragon, the Old Serpent, was cast out of heaven down to the earth, where he had no home; but then he erected his bulwark in the being of man, and now he is entrenched in human nature.

In this way that mighty image of Michael and the Dragon still constituted for those times an integral part of human cognition. An anthroposophy appropriate to that period would have to explain that by taking outer nature into himself through

nourishment, breathing, and perception, man creates within himself a sphere of action for the Dragon. The Dragon lives in human nature; and this conception dwelt so definitely in the Gemüt of 18th century men that one could easily imagine them as having stationed some clairvoyant being on another planet to draw a picture of the earth. And he would have shown everything existing in the minerals, plants and animals — in short, in the extra-human — as bearing no trace of the Dragon, but he would have drawn the Dragon as coiling through the animality in man, thereby representing an earth-being.

Thus the situation changed for people of the 18th century from that out of which it all had grown in pre-human times. For pre-humanity the conflict between Michael and the Dragon had to be located in outer objectivity, so to speak; but now the Dragon was outwardly nowhere to be found. Where was he? Where would one have to look for him? Anywhere wherever there were men on earth, that's where he 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, he must henceforth continue the struggle within human nature. — This occurred in the remote past and persisted into the 18th century. But those who held this view knew that they had transferred to the inner man an event that had formerly been a cosmic one. And they said, in effect: Look back to olden times when you must imagine Michael to have cast the Dragon out of heaven down to earth — an event taking place in extra-human worlds. And behold the later time: Man comes to earth, he takes into himself outer nature, transforms it, thus enabling the Dragon to take possession of it, and the conflict between Michael and the Dragon must henceforth be carried out on the earth.

Such thought trends were not as abstract as people of the present would like thoughts to be. Today people like to get along with thoughts 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 during the course of evolution, mankind 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 his sphere of action.

But precisely this infused into the Michael problem the germinating of human freedom. For if the conflict had continued within man in the same way it



had formerly occurred without, the human being would positively have become an automaton. By reason of being transferred to the inner being, the struggle became in a sense — expressed by an outer abstraction — a battle of the higher nature in man against the lower. But the only form it could assume for human consciousness was that of Michael in the supersensible worlds, to which men were led to lift their gaze. And as a matter of fact, in the 18th century there still existed numerous guides, instructions, all providing ways by which men could reach the sphere of Michael, so that with the help of his strength they might fight the Dragon dwelling in their own animal nature.

Such a man, able to see into the deeper spiritual life of the 18th century would have to be represented pictorially somewhat as follows: outwardly the human form; in the lower, animalistic portion the Dragon writhing — even coiling about the heart; but then — behind the man, as it were, for we see the higher things with the back of our head — the outer cosmic figure of Michael, towering, radiant, retaining his cosmic nature but reflecting it in the higher human nature, so that the man's own etheric body reflects etherically the cosmic figure of Michael. Then there would be visible in this human head — but working down into the heart — the power of Michael, crushing the Dragon and causing his blood to flow down from the man's heart to the limbs.

That was the picture of the inner-human struggle of Michael with the dragon still harbored by many people of the 18th century. It was also the picture which suggested at that time to many people that it was their duty to conquer the "lower" with the help of the "higher," as they expressed it: that man needed the Michael power for his own life.

The intellect sees the Kant-Laplace theory; it sees the Kant-Laplace primal vapor — perhaps a spiral vapor. Out of this, planets evolve, leaving the sun in the middle. On one of the planets gradually arise the kingdoms of nature; man comes into being. And looking into the future, all this is seen to pass over again into the great graveyard of natural existence.— The intellect cannot help imagining the matter in this way; and because more and more the intellect has become the only recognized autocrat of human cognition, the world view has gradually become what it is for mankind in general. But in all those earlier people of whom I have spoken today, the eye of the Gemüt, as I might call it, was active. In his intellect a man can isolate himself from the world, for everyone has his own head and in that head his own thoughts. In his Gemüt he cannot do that, for the Gemüt is not dependent upon the head but upon the rhythmic organism of man. 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 it will again be the general air when I exhale it. It is only the head that isolates man, makes of him a hermit on the earth. Even in respect of the physical organization of his Gemüt, man is not isolated in this way. In that respect he belongs to the cosmos, is merely a figure in the cosmos.

But gradually the Gemüt lost its power of vision, and the head alone became seeing. The head alone, however, develops only intellectuality — it isolates man. When men still saw with their Gemüt, they did not project abstract thoughts into the cosmos with the object of interpreting it, of explaining it: They still read grandiose images into it [Translator's note: "saw into it" is Rudolf Steiner's expression], like that of Michael's Fight with the Dragon. Such a man saw what lived in his own nature and being, something that had evolved out of the world, out of the cosmos, as I described it today. He saw the inner Michael struggle come to life in the human being, in the anthropos, and take the place of the external Michael battle in the cosmos. He saw anthroposophy develop out of cosmosophy. And whenever we look back to an older world view from the abstract thoughts that affect us as cold and matter-of-fact, whose intellectuality makes us shiver, we are guided to images, one of the most grandiose of which is this of Michael at war with the Dragon; Michael, who first cast the Dragon to earth where, I might say, the Dragon could occupy his human fortress; Michael, who then became the fighter of the Dragon in man, as described.

In this picture that I have evoked for you, Michael stands cosmically behind man, while within man there is an etheric image of Michael that wages the real battle through which man can gradually become free. For it is not Michael himself who wages the battle, but human devotion and the resulting image of Michael. In the cosmic Michael there still lives that being to whom men can look up and who engaged in the original cosmic struggle with the Dragon. Truly, not upon earth alone do events take place — in fact, earth events remain incomprehensible for us unless we are able to see them as images of events in the supersensible world and to find their causes there. In this sense a Michael deed was performed 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 manner that is nowadays discredited as anthropomorphic; but how could I relate it otherwise than by using human words to describe what occurs in the supersensible world?

The epoch during which Michael cast the Dragon down to earth was thought of as lying far back in the pre-human times. But then, man appeared upon the

earth and there occurred what I have described: the war between Michael and the Dragon became ever more an inner struggle. It was at the end of the 19th century that Michael could say: The image in man is now sufficiently condensed for him to be aware of it within himself. He can now feel in his Gemüt the Conqueror of the Dragon — at least, the image means something to him. — In the evolution of mankind, the last third of the 19th century stands for something extraordinarily important. In older times there was in man primarily only a tenuous image of Michael; but it condensed more and more, and in the last third of the 19th century there appeared what follows: In earlier times the invisible, supersensible Dragon was predominant, active in the passions and instincts, in the desires and in the animal lusts. For ordinary consciousness that Dragon remains supersensible; he dwells in man's animal nature. But there he lives in all that tends to drag man down, goading him into becoming gradually sub-human. The condition was such that Michael always intervened in human nature, in order that humanity should not fall too low.

But in the last third of the 19th century, the Michael image became so strong in man that the matter of directing his feelings upward and rising to the Michael image came to depend upon his goodwill, so to speak, so that on the one hand, in unenlightened experience of the feelings, he may glimpse the image of the Dragon, and on the other hand, the radiant figure of Michael may stand before the soul's eye — radiant in spiritual vision, yet within the reach of ordinary consciousness. So the content of the human Gemüt 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 Gemüt upon this glowing figure, I let its light stream into my Gemüt, and thus my illumined and warmed Gemüt will bear within it the strength of Michael. And out of a free resolution I shall be able, through my alliance with Michael, to conquer the Dragon's might in my own lower nature.

If the requisite goodwill were forthcoming in extensive circles to raise such a conception to a religious force and to inscribe it in every Gemüt, we would not have all the vague and important ideas such as prevail in every quarter today — plans for reforms, and the like. Rather, we would have something that once again could seize hold on the whole inner man, because that is what can be inscribed in the living Gemüt — that living Gemüt which enters into a living relationship with the whole cosmos the moment it really comes to life.

Then those glowing Michael thoughts 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 men would be prepared for the festivals of the year, the understanding of which only glimmers faintly across the ages — but at least it glimmers — and they would celebrate in full consciousness the festival the calendar sets at the end of September, at the beginning of autumn: the Michael Festival. This will regain its significance only when we are able to experience in our soul such a living vision. And when we are able to feel it in a living way and to make it into an instinctive social impulse of the present, then this Michael Festival — because the impulses spring directly from the spiritual world — could be regarded as the crowning impulse — even the initial impulse we need to find our way out of the present disaster: to add something real to all the talk about ideals, something not originating in human heads or hearts but in the cosmos.

And then, when the trees shed their leaves and blossoms ripen into fruit, when 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 — just as we feel the Easter Festival with the sprouting, budding spring. Then, as citizens of the cosmos, we would be able to carry impulses into our lives which, not being abstract, would not remain ineffectual but would manifest their power immediately. Life will not have a soul content again until we can develop cosmic impulses in our Gemüt.

### **From the second lecture in the series**

At the moment we will go on to say that in the human being there dwells the force I have described as the force of the Dragon whom Michael encounters, against whom he does battle. I indicated that this Dragon has an animal-like form, yet is really a supersensible being; that on account of his insubordination as a supersensible being he was expelled into the sense world, where he now has his being; and I indicated further that he exists only in man, because outer nature cannot harbor him. Outer nature, image of divine spirituality, has in its innocence nothing whatever to do with Dragon: He is established in the being of men, as I have set forth. But by reason of being such a creature — a supersensible being in the sense of world — he instantly attracts the supersensible elemental forces that stream toward man out of nature and unites with them, with the result that man, instead of releasing the plant elementals from their spell through his soul and

Gemüt, unites them with the Dragon, and allows them to perish with the Dragon in his lower nature. For everything in the world moves in an evolutionary stream, taking many different directions to this end; and the elemental beings dwelling in minerals, plants, and animals must rise to a higher existence than is offered by their present abodes. This they can accomplish only by passing through man. The establishment of an external civilization is surely not man's sole purpose on earth. He has a cosmic aim within the entire world evolution; and this cosmic aim is linked with such matters as I have just described — with the further development of those elemental beings that in earthly existence are at a low state, but destined for a higher one. When man enters into a certain relationship with them, and when everything runs as it should, they can attain to this higher stage of evolution.

In the old days of instinctive human evolution, when in the Gemüt the forces of soul and spirit shone forth and when these were as much a matter of course to him as were the forces of nature, world evolution actually progressed in such a way that the stream of existence passed through man in a normal, orderly way, as it were. But precisely during the epoch that must now terminate, that must advance to a higher form of spirituality, untold elemental substance within man has been delivered over to the Dragon. For it is his very nature to hunger and thirst for these elemental beings, to creep about, frightening plants and minerals in order to gorge himself with the elemental beings of nature. For with them he wants to unite, and with them to permeate his own being. In extrahuman nature he cannot do this, but only in the inner nature of man, for only there is existence possible for him. And if this were to continue, the earth would be doomed, for the Dragon would inevitably be victorious in earthly existence.

He would be victorious for a very definite reason: By virtue of his saturating himself, as it were, with elemental beings in human nature, something happens physically, psychically, and spiritually. Spiritually: No human being would ever arrive at the silly belief in a purely material outer world, as assumed by nature research today; he would never come to accept dead atoms and the like; he would never assume the existence of such reactionary laws as that of the conservation of force and energy, or of the permanence of matter, were not the Dragon in him to absorb the elemental beings from without. When these come to be in man, in the body of the Dragon, human observation is distracted from what things contain of spirit; man no longer sees spirit in things, which in the meantime has entered into him; he sees nothing but dead matter. — Psychically: Everything a

man has ever expressed in the way of what I must call cowardice of soul results from the Dragon's having absorbed the elemental powers within him. Oh, how widespread is this cowardice of the soul! We know quite well that we should do this or that, that such and such is the right thing to do in a given situation; but we cannot bring our self to do it — a certain dead weight acts in our soul: the elemental beings in the Dragon's body are at work in us. — And physically: Man would never be tormented by what are called disease germs had his body not been prepared — through the spiritual effects I have just described — as a soil for the germs. These things penetrate even into the physical organization; and we can say that if we perceive man rightly in his spirit, soul, and body as he is constituted today, we find him cut off from the spirit realm in three dimensions — for a good purpose, to be sure: the attainment of freedom. He no longer has in him the spiritual powers he might have; and thus you see that through this threefold debilitation of his life, through what the gluttoned Dragon has become in him, he is prevented from experiencing the potency of the spirit within himself.

There are two ways of experiencing anthroposophy — many variations lie between, but I am mentioning only the two extremes — and one of them is this: A man sits down in a chair, takes a book, reads it, and finds it quite interesting as well as comforting to learn that there is such a thing as spirit, as immortality. It just suits him to know that with regard to the soul as well, man is not dead when his body dies. He derives greater satisfaction from such a cosmogony than from a materialistic one. He takes it up as one might take up abstract reflections on geography, except that anthroposophy provides more of comfort. Yes, that is one way. The man gets up from his chair really no different from what he was when he sat down, except for having derived a certain satisfaction from what he read — or heard, if it was a lecture instead of a book.

But there is another way of receiving what anthroposophy has to give. It is to absorb something like the idea of Michael's Conflict with the Dragon in such a way as really to become inwardly transformed, to feel it as an important, incisive experience, and to rise from your chair fundamentally quite a different being after reading something of that sort.

But man must not die: He must not let himself be overpowered. He can live united with burgeoning, blossoming nature, and in doing so he can develop his nature-consciousness; but when he experiences the dying in nature the experience is a challenge to oppose this dying with the creative forces of his own inner being. Then the spirit-soul principle, his true self-consciousness, will come to life

within him; and by sharing in nature's dying during the fall and winter, he will become in the highest degree the awakener of his own self-consciousness. In this way the human being evolves: He transforms himself in the course of the seasons by experiencing this alternation of nature-consciousness and self-consciousness. When he takes part in nature's dying, that is the time when his inner life force must awake; when nature draws her elemental beings into herself, the inner human force must become the awakening of self-consciousness.



