

LECTURE 6

The Great Delusion of Contemporary Culture

St. Gallen, October 26, 1916

RICH, DETAILED MATERIAL is available to us today in our literature from which we can learn facts that spiritual science is able to bring down from extrasensory worlds, and our branches are able to work with this material. Thus it would be advisable, when we have the opportunity to meet in person, to talk about how this material can be positioned in relation to our spiritual life; how we can bring it into our life; how we ourselves can feel refreshed, uplifted, and strengthened through it in life. In short, it would be advisable if we consider the matters of our spiritual movement more, while we have the opportunity, because indeed we can only rarely meet in person given the nature of circumstances in these times.

Many of you will note that you still have a variety of difficulties as you immerse yourselves in spiritual science or anthroposophy today. Is it not true that we first come to terms with spiritual science through the needs of our souls because our souls pose questions about the most important riddles of life? We come to terms with spiritual science when we look at life today, with everything it can involve, and see how few of the various spiritual trends, whether religious or scientific, can really give satisfying answers in a deeper sense to the great enigmatic questions of life. And then, when we have come to terms with this spiritual-scientific movement through our thirst for knowledge, our yearning for knowledge; when we have immersed ourselves for a time in the knowledge that has been elicited until now from the spiritual worlds, we often encounter difficulties—difficulties of the most varied kinds. These are different for each person, and that is why they are not exactly easy to describe in a few words. Our friends often say that by immersing themselves in spiritual science, they have

gained something extraordinarily valuable, something meaningful for life. But it has also isolated them; it has uprooted them from the community of other people. It has also, in a way, made life difficult for them. Those who are by nature dependent on the opinion of the outside world in their spiritual aspirations feel this particularly intensely, and the most varied difficulties result from this.

For other friends, something akin to a state of worry, one might say, occurs after they have immersed themselves in spiritual science for a time; something that frightens them, that makes them frightened by all sorts of questions: how to cope with life, and so on. Many of you have had to ask yourselves similar questions. Such questions are often questions of feeling and perception. I would like to begin today's contemplations with such difficulties of the inner soul life.

We sometimes do not correctly understand the true connection between these perceptions, which can be different for each person; the real connections. We must always bear in mind that those of us who feel attracted to anthroposophical truths make up only a very small handful of people today. We are in the middle of the struggle for existence that is waged outside of our circle with means that are sharply different from ours. And those who reflect even just a little on all that anthroposophy is trying to be for life will be able to observe how entirely different the goals of thinking, feeling, and willing under the influence of anthroposophical ideas are from the goals that the great majority of people set for themselves today. Because thoughts and feelings are actual facts, we should understand that our little handful of people, that is every single one of us, is thus part of a comparatively small life-group that is—one can say in most cases—completely opposite to the thoughts, sensations, and feelings of the rest of humanity. Even if the life difficulties that arise for us take on the most varied forms and do not immediately show connections to what I have just described, they are indeed connected; and we must attempt to bring before our souls the way we can cope with such difficulties; with the difficulties that arise when we remain true and devoted to the cause of anthroposophy but collide with the rest of the world.

As I said, things become blurred, and they do not always show their true colors. We have to effectively introduce to our own souls a

remedy in order to find greater inner harmony despite the opposition of the outer world; and with this remedy we must make our souls strong so that they grow and overcome what often arises in our souls in the form of frightening things, disharmonies. The remedy is a clear, true understanding of the relationship to the rest of humanity that those who declare support for, or are interested in, anthroposophy find themselves in; our relationship to the rest of humanity. To think clear, incisive thoughts about this purifies our souls in such a way that we can also be strong when contradictory outer forces plague us. If one thinks about the matter within a limited horizon, one could say, "But what good does it do me to become really clear about what divides anthroposophy from the rest of the world? My life conditions will not change by doing so!" To think in this way would be a mistake. Although life conditions may not change from one day to the next through clear thinking that produces understanding; nevertheless, the strength that we gain from such clear thinking, in the way I just indicated, gradually strengthens us in such a way that our life conditions do, in fact, change. It is just that we sometimes do not find the opportunity to develop really clear, incisive, and therefore strong enough thoughts of this kind.

With regard to what we would like to gain for ourselves through spiritual science or anthroposophy, and what we would like to gain not just for ourselves but for the world, we must bring before our souls as one of these clear thoughts that in today's culture humanity lives in a terrible, more or less conscious or unconscious lie, and the effect of this lie is immense. This is actually saying something very meaningful, and I want to bring more clarity precisely to this point.

As a truly thinking person, with a fully healthy understanding, one can hardly look at what exists today in the form of general culture in the so-called cultivated world without being clear that much is missing from this culture; that, above all, this culture lacks sufficient impulses for life. Instead, in our time there are many widely dissipated ideals, as people call them, for which all sorts of societies and associations are founded that put on programs through which this or that ideal is supposed to be expressed! It is all very well-intentioned, such that one can say that those people who form associations, large

or small, from all the circles and strata of life, under the impression of this or that ideal, want what is good from their viewpoint. And the convictions of these people should be respected fully. But for the most part, these people live under the restrictive influence of a certain constraint that comes from unconscious timidity, unconscious spiritual cowardice in regard precisely to the most important thing that humanity needs today. We say: *the* most important! What humanity needs today is spiritual knowledge, and the introduction of certain spiritual insights into our lives.

That was, in fact, a major question in the course of the nineteenth century. As you know, there are spiritual laws, laws governing the spiritual worlds. Certain people in every time have known about these, and of course these were also known in the so-called occult societies in the course of the nineteenth century, when spiritual science had not yet appeared in the form in which it is present today. These occult societies, which were more or less deserving of the name, wanted to cultivate occult truths in the most varied ways, and also had a certain insight into what spiritual truths mean for the world. Right in the middle of the nineteenth century, a crisis arose regarding the deepest impulses in the recent evolution of humanity. This crisis existed during a particular upswing in materialism in all fields; in the field of knowledge, in the field of life. Materialism had reached high tide. Indeed we see that numerous people emerged who wanted to found a comprehensive worldview from scientific materialism.

But this theoretical materialism was not the most corrupting thing; rather, it was practical materialism, the materialism that settled into ethical and social life and into people's religious feeling that led humanity to a crisis in the course of the nineteenth century. And, as a result, from the middle of the nineteenth century on, those who knew something about these occult societies directed their attention to how they could remedy this spreading materialism. In certain circles, people had spiritual-scientific insight, just not insight of the kind that can be effective on its own, nor in the form that, in all modesty, we strive for. Those who had a traditional, or in some other way outmoded spiritual-scientific insight into the evolution of humanity asked themselves, "How can we remedy what is dawning

over modern humanity like a disaster as a result of materialism?" And they said to themselves, "We will remedy it by giving people proof that, just as sensory facts surround us, so too do spiritual facts and spiritual beings." But people were accustomed only to experimental thinking, and to outer experience and perception. And so these people, with spiritual-scientific insight and concerns such as those I mentioned, did not know what to do other than to prove the spiritual world in the same way that we prove natural processes of the outer sensory world. They tried everything. And we saw movements arise in the nineteenth century that focused on convincing people of the existence of a spiritual world. The most primitive of these movements was the spiritist movement. Although scholars today have difficulty coming to terms with the comparatively transparent methods of our spiritual science, truly brilliant scholars of the nineteenth century studied spiritism very seriously.

Spiritism has the characteristic of having an outward effect through something that can be placed before the outer senses, such as a chemical or physical experiment. For the most part, this method, which attempts to reproduce natural science as spiritual science, is already bankrupt today (I say, for the most part). And we will see more and more that it must become bankrupt because you cannot show people how to grasp spirit with their hands, figuratively speaking. Thus, much of what has been done by all sorts of occult machinations of certain so-called occult societies in the course of the nineteenth century, and up until the present time, has actually brought disrepute to spiritual-scientific study rather than supporting it. Therefore we see that, even in the most well-meaning people who have insight, namely in a social respect, but also in other ways in regard to practical aspects of life conduct, there is still much that needs to happen from the present onward, and into the future. For people who have such insight, we see how they almost feel a certain shock when someone says that the most important impulses needed in the present and near future must come from true spirit-knowledge, from the insight that true spiritual forces and spiritual beings surround human beings, just as sensory facts and sensory beings do. The people who mean well in regard to humanity's progress get a real shock. Let me give

an example. We can learn quite a lot from examples that have to do with overarching life phenomena. If we turn our attention to a large movement, then we can clearly see in this large movement the things that we all come across daily on a smaller scale.

A quite important man, one who was truly serious-minded in regard to humanity's impulses toward social progress, was murdered in Paris on the day before the outbreak of this disastrous world war: Jean Jaurès.[‡] Jaurès was surely one of the most serious personalities directly active in the social efforts of our time. He was also one who strove to achieve insight through earthly knowledge into current life conditions and into the reasons for which these conditions are driving humanity further and further *ad absurdum*; further and further into impoverishment and hardship in the spiritual and material realms. And he strove with all of his strength to find ideas and thoughts to convey to people, so that through collective efforts the great life questions of our time could, in some degree, come closer to being answered. We can learn much specifically from such personalities as Jaurès because we learn the most when we consider the great deficiencies (which one must see from the spiritual-scientific point of view especially in our time, and about which one must have clear thinking) not of insignificant, but of great personalities. We learn the most, if we are sure of their primarily honorable convictions and serious efforts at realization, and also of a certain capacity for contemporary insight. We gain so much more when we analyze people whom we respect and highly esteem in regard to the damages of our time, rather than people for whom we have less respect because we cannot ascribe to them goodwill and good dispositions in the highest sense.

Now for such people as Jaurès, who devoted all of their thoughts, feelings and will to the service of humanity, to the service that must be provided in raising humanity to a higher social level, it is extremely difficult to talk about something such as our spiritual science. And he is truly no exception; we see the best people of our time in this difficulty. And precisely these very talented people would be able to effect what they wish to effect for humanity only if they could say, "Everything that I can achieve with my usual cognitive and scientific

means provides me only with impulses that are too weak to really be able to seize life. I must recognize that all these impulses that I wish to convey to humanity as I go along are without a base. I must first create a base for myself; I must penetrate and permeate what I have believed until now with the more solid foundation of spiritual science. I must recognize spiritual facts, true spiritual facts.”

You see, for someone who thinks all sorts of thoughts and forms ideals of how to assist human progress today, but does not recognize such spiritual facts, it is the same as for someone who is in a garden with many plants that are beginning to show signs of death, and who does this, does that, does a lot, and makes an effort the whole time; but achieves nothing. Oh, one plant gets a little better, another a little worse, but overall the plants don't get better. Why don't things get better? Maybe some sickness has taken hold of the roots, which this person does not check or consider. That is exactly the case with the social efforts of people such as Jaurès. They make an extraordinary effort and they find a great many splendid things on the surface, but they do not penetrate into the roots because the roots of human life today are missing the recognition of a true spiritual world. And people establish so many seemingly well-founded social insights that will in truth be fruitless for humanity if they are not based on the insights that can come only from spiritual science. Thus a real advance for today's humanity will only be possible if the most important part of spiritual science for our time can be recognized: namely, the reality of spiritual beings and spiritual forces. The acknowledgement of this, however, presents people with a real difficulty—especially the best-intentioned of people. Let us think clearly about this fact that these people, those with the best intentions, have difficulties precisely with the most important aspect of our subject: the acknowledgement of the spiritual world as such.

Over in Zurich I pointed out an example that illustrates this particularly well.[‡] There is a man who has spoken very positively about our spiritual science, and also had what he said printed.[‡] This man once had the courage to speak in front of a very learned audience that looks upon what lives within our spiritual movement as no more than pure foolishness. But this man cannot help but stop right before the

most important aspects: before accepting the spiritual world. What does he say?

We must rather try to understand it [this spiritual movement], or at least the circle around Steiner, as a religious movement among our contemporaries, even though it is not original but rather syncretic; but even so is directed towards the basis of all life. We may judge it as a movement for the satisfaction of people's extrasensory interests, and thus as surpassing realism, which clings to the sensory. Above all, we may recognize in it a movement that points people to personal reflection for the moral problems they face; and that aims for working toward inner rebirth out of a painstaking attention to self-education. One need only read Steiner's introduction to *Theosophy* to see with what earnestness people are pointed toward the work on their moral purification and self-refinement.‡

I am reading you these words because I want you to see with a truly clear awareness how the outer world relates to our endeavors. You see that this is a well-meaning person who, even so, sees our movement as syncretic; he does not recognize, does not know, what a completely new movement it is; that it is based on something new to the world: on the new natural-scientific movement, which is its foundation. He has a well-meaning attitude toward our movement, but cannot give any information about it because he does not understand it. And if we really take in this whole lecture that he gave, "The World of Thought of the Educated," we see that this man thinks that spiritual education of the human being is necessary in our time; and he sees in our movement an attempt to promote this spiritual movement for humanity. But then he says, and this is characteristic, "Further, in its speculation directed towards the suprasensory, it is a reaction to materialism; however, in doing so, it loses touch somewhat with reality and goes as far as hypotheses." He believes that true spiritual insights are hypotheses, not knowledge. "It goes ...as far as clairvoyant fantasies, a dream world, so that it no longer has adequate power remaining for the reality of the individual and social art of living."

And later he says, “But after all, we want to, and must, note Theosophy as a corrective phenomenon in current educational development.” You see, even though he judges it in such a well-intentioned way, he feels compelled to stop before getting to all of the things without which our movement cannot even be imagined; and before the primary thing we contribute: suprasensory facts. Without human beings achieving a relationship to suprasensory facts, humanity cannot be saved from the dead end in which it finds itself today. But even well-meaning people believe that this movement leads to a dream world; that it does not have “adequate power remaining,” precisely in relation to the social art of living, even though our movement specifically seeks to have solid ground under it, and without which all other social ideals have nothing to stand on. As I said, this is not ill will based on mistrust; rather it is mistrust sprung from unconscious timidity, unconscious despondency in relation to the acknowledgment of spiritual facts. This is a clear lack of insight; and it is clear that it is this lack of insight that spiritual science specifically can do something about in laying a foundation for social striving. And so, people such as Jaurès, because of the thoughts they assimilated from their upbringing and education, find themselves in life today without the possibility of recognizing that everything that occurs physically is dependent on the spiritual world. They cannot see that human beings can intervene in life within the sphere in which they work—for example, in relation to social life—that they can really intervene only if this is made possible for them by knowledge of the spiritual laws with which the spiritual world can be brought into the physical. And the fact that such people are faced with this impossibility; that this is truly a contemporary phenomenon widespread among the most enlightened people of our time, brings significant—though unconscious, but no less significant for it—delusions into our time. These grand delusions can be found everywhere.

Let us take the case of Jaurès, since his is a typical case. There stood a person before the rest of humanity who sought an improvement with all the means of social awareness; and he correctly recognized that it would only lead people to a dead end. There stood a person before the rest of humanity who, in order to attain the necessary insights in

this field, had really made himself familiar with all the historical facts. He had studied history and wished to learn from the facts of earlier times what could happen in the present, and thus how errors could be avoided. Now Jaurès in all of his striving becomes unable, as others do, to recognize a spiritual world in a truly real way; to recognize in a truly real way that streams of spiritual life flow perpetually from the spiritual world through human beings into this world.

One of the best articles that Jaurès wrote deals with the relations that exist, according to him, between socialism and patriotism.[‡] Jaurès tries to show how historical events intervene in the evolution of humanity and have an effect on the evolution of humanity. After he has brought before us details about what had an effect on the Roman Empire in order to learn from that how things should be effected in the present, and after he brings various other things before us with an extraordinarily thorough thirst for knowledge, he then presents us with a new chapter from more recent times. It is a strange chapter in Jaurès' book, which concerns the proletariat and patriotism; and it is interesting to examine specifically this little chapter to see what is actually taking place in the souls of the most knowledgeable people around us today.

It is crucial to Jaurès to show in this chapter that ownership of property is not what is foremost in recent social progress, but rather industry, and so on—but we will not get involved with these things; the important thing is that he is compelled here to make reference to Joan of Arc, the Maiden of Orléans.[‡] Now just think, a man who lives completely in the ideas of the present refers to the Maiden of Orléans. Anyone who has studied recent history knows (those who look at the facts objectively will have to admit this) that the map of Europe would simply be much different today if Joan of Arc had not intervened. Of course Jaurès also recognizes this. He says:

Joan of Arc completed her mission and sacrificed her life for the salvation of the fatherland, in a France for which property no longer represented the only life force. Communities already played a very important role; Saint Louis IX had sanctioned and solemnly proclaimed the organization of trade and guild rights;

the Paris revolutions during the governments of Charles V and Charles VI[‡] had seen the trading bourgeoisie and the crafts associations come on the scene as new forces. The most clairvoyant among those who wanted to reform the kingdom dreamed of an alliance between the bourgeoisie and the farming community against lawlessness and despotism. Into this modern France, which would soon be ruled by the ‘People’s King’[‡] (the son of the poor ruler whom Joan of Arc was about to save); into this diverse, thoroughly educated and refined country, which was affected by the delicate literary pain of this Charles of Orléans,[‡] whose imprisonment moved hearts in good Lorraine—into this society that was anything but rural, came Joan of Arc. She was a simple country girl who had seen the pain and hardship of farmers around her, for whom all of these torments only represented a closer example of the more solemn and greater suffering the plundered kingdom and the attacked nation had endured. No place, no property was important in her soul, in her thoughts; she ignored the Lorraine fields. Her farmer’s heart was greater than all the farming community. It beat for the far-off good cities, which surrounded the stranger. Living in the fields did not mean necessarily being wrapped up in the questions of the field. In the noise and bustle of the cities, Joan’s dream would surely have been less free, less bold and comprehensive. Loneliness protected the boldness of her thoughts, and she experienced the great community of the fatherland much more intensely because her imagination could fill the quiet horizon with a pain and a hope without confusion, and that went beyond it. She did not feel the spirit of rural revolt; she wanted to free the very large country of France in order to consecrate it to the service of God, to Christendom and to justice. Her goal seemed so high and holy to her that she later even found the courage to oppose the Church in order to reach it and to refer to a revelation that she said was superior to every other revelation.[‡]

Here [in Jaurès] we see a person who is doomed to think based only on materialistic principles, so to speak, because he is part of today’s

materialistic thinking, but at the same time is compelled to point out this strange phenomenon of the Maiden of Orléans because, to the high degree we can discern from his words, he wants to be historically honest, and to take her seriously. Thus Jaurès is confronted with the entire historical meaning of Joan of Arc. But now we ask ourselves: For such a person who holds a social view like that of Jaurès, what else, in the end, can Joan of Arc actually be?—other than someone who came to her impulses through a sort of religious ecstasy, which people should not aspire to do, likewise, if they want to remain reasonable. This may even be taking it too far personally for Jaurès if we suggest this; but for many others who act in the spirit of Jaurès, it is certainly not an overstatement. These people will certainly not recognize what must be clear to us from spiritual science: that in those earlier times the spirit-knowledge we have today—which has developed in modern times—was not yet achieved. Spiritual life streamed from the spiritual worlds and had an effect through individuals more or less subconsciously, such as with the Maiden of Orléans. These people will not acknowledge that she was a medium—one that took action not for people who, as in recent times, misuse mediums in so many ways, but rather for the divine-spiritual world that was attempting to affect the physical earthly world. We must recognize that what came from the Maiden of Orléans had more value than what her contemporaries were able to communicate from their human insights. Of course, our contemporaries cannot acknowledge that the spiritual world spoke through Joan of Arc. Nevertheless, if they are speaking of true facts, they must speak about people such as the Maiden of Orléans; they must acknowledge her. That is, they must credit what takes place—just think of it—to individuals whose spiritual lives they do not recognize, and whose spiritual lives they certainly do not wish to aspire to.

Here is nothing but the greatest delusion—though people do not want to admit it even today and can anesthetize themselves to this fact, too. I will describe just one case to you of the great delusion, which is pulsing through all aspects of our social life today, and which is the cause of people not recognizing what is true, what is the absolute truth, but having to look at it as a fact, nevertheless, given what

recent spiritual development has brought forth. Lies are now accepted as facts, too, and they have a corresponding effect. And if thoroughly well-meaning, earnestly striving, important people such as Jaurès are caught up in a great delusion such as this through the circumstances of our time, what comes from them cannot have a liberating effect for humanity.

Yes, we find ourselves in this present moment, which must be allowed to effect our souls clearly and distinctly. We must have the courage to examine great delusions such as this with clear insight; and from this clear examination, find the strength to keep ourselves going in the face of what is streaming in from all sides. What streams in from this great delusion, from one side or another, sometimes comes in a very masked and hidden way. What true inner insight into the connections of human life can people who find themselves in a great delusion such as this actually gain? They might think that the odd characters who pop up, such as the Maiden of Orléans, who want to have a connection to the spiritual worlds, must be ascribed historical significance, but that in truth this should not be presented as an example anyone should aspire to as a way to somehow bring spiritual forces into the physical world! A great deal more water will flow down the Rhine before other circles realize and recognize the entire profound fact that we have talked about.

Today natural scientists have taken on the same airs that the theologians took on in regard to the Maiden of Orléans back then. The last thing Jaurès points out is part of the deep tragedy of the arrival of the Maiden of Orléans. The theologians said back then, “What she has unearthed in terms of her spiritual world-knowledge is not consistent with what we know through our theology!” It is out of the same opinion that existed in the theological field then that, after only a short period of time, the natural-scientific people speak today. The Maiden of Orléans answered those who judged her on the basis of their theology, and who said she must justify her miracles and her mission using religious texts, with these words: “More is written in God’s Book than in all your texts!” That is a historical quotation. But it is also a quotation that is still applicable today because all objections—all theological and natural-scientific objections—can be

responded to from the standpoint of spiritual science. More is written in the book of the spiritual worlds than our adversaries think possible. And Jaurès adds to these words, “A wonderful word that is contrary in a certain way to the peasant’s soul, whose faith is primarily rooted in its origins. How far it all is from the vague, narrow-minded, and limited patriotism of the landed class! But Joan hears the divine voices of her heart as she looks up to the radiant and gentle celestial heights.”[‡]

Yes, such recognition sounds very good coming from the mouths of our contemporaries, but what is this really—to even the most learned of our contemporaries? An acknowledgement of something that they take more or less as fiction; a fiction that to some extent can make life better, but to which they accord no reality. This is what the great delusion does!

Thus we see that we need clarity about the existence of this great delusion. Its effects confront us everywhere, and it is preventing spiritual science from having the influence today that it should really have. More and more, people will have to gain not only theoretical insight into spiritual science, but also potent inner strength in order to bring spiritual science into every area of life. This is true in the many different areas of life. But again it can be said that the true facts are masked in this case, because an objection could seemingly be made to everything that spiritual science says.

Let us take an area of life that is most appreciated by human beings for the simple reason that it is quite closely connected to their outer well-being. You see, spiritual science would have an incredibly beneficial effect on university medical departments, medical science, and pharmacology, if they were allowed to be influenced even a little bit by spiritual science. Modern natural-scientific development has caused medical science itself to take on a materialistic character more and more. Certainly, this materialistic character has also been very beneficial. One need only mention the extraordinarily great progress that has been made in surgery to find some justification. Even if what I am saying has been said again and again, we must marvel at the recent progress made by natural science. But there are other sides of medical knowledge and the art of medicine that are no less important. They suffer tremendously from this materialistic trend and will be

able to meet a beneficial future only if spiritual-scientific knowledge is introduced to their research.

Through spiritual-scientific insights, connections in the human organism are discovered, whereas current medical science knows only isolated details. Certainly, such things are often sensed instinctively by more insightful researchers, but progress cannot proceed quickly enough in this way. If such a wide-spread rejection of everything that is spiritual science did not reign, specifically in the medical field, and if medical science did not strive to become monopolized into one power by medical authorities and governments, immense things could be accomplished for the healing of humanity in the field of medicine through spiritual science. You may say, well, nothing is stopping a spiritual scientist from bringing this progress about! Here again, things are masked, because this is actually not true. The materialistic mode that reigns today in fact prevents spiritual science from intervening. It is a thoroughly false belief that spiritual scientists today can help a person in all cases. They are prevented from this by the outer materialistic mode of medical science, and will be prevented more and more if the materialistic mode of medical science continues still longer. We cannot say to spiritual scientists in the medical field, “This is Rhodes; dance here”[‡]—because their legs are not free to dance.

There are indeed all sorts of commendable efforts being made against the reigning materialism in medical science; but these efforts are insufficient. Most of all, the insight is lacking that although it is necessary to oppose materialistic medicine, at the same time we must work with what modern medicine has acquired, with the means that are needed outwardly in this field, but in a spiritual-scientific sense. People would be astonished at what would result if the spiritual-scientific view were brought into clinics and dissecting rooms, as well as to all of the other resources and sources of aid in the medical establishment. This is the direction in which our endeavors must go. Our endeavors must go not toward disregarding materialistic medicine, but rather toward bringing spiritual science to the materialistic mode. And before this is accomplished, we will not be able to help even in individual cases. The situation that makes it impossible cannot be discussed in such a short lecture, but it is so. Thus, if there were

less prejudice against spiritual science, an immense amount could be accomplished precisely in a field that is so natural to physical human healing.

And concerning the burning social questions, it would come to light that the many attempts being made to improve things in the social field, to improve various living conditions, will fail. For only when people come to base social insights, as well, on spiritual-scientific axioms—like mathematics or geometry are based on their axioms—only then will truly effective means be found.

And so we live in a world that must, if we are moved by spiritual science or anthroposophy, stand across from our own souls with radically different thoughts and feelings. We live in an atmosphere, so to speak, that demands a potent development of strength, a powerful perseverance. Those are the deeper reasons why one can often become disheartened and feel lonely; why perhaps a few, here and there, although declaring support for spiritual science, cannot cope very well with life. But when we have clear insight as to how great is the thing that we are part of in the whole human nexus, and how it seems like a small thing today only because we are still at its beginning, we can find this strength; then we can really find it. Every great thing in the evolution of humanity must begin small.

Here, too, as I did recently in Zurich,[‡] I would like to point out how limitation, illogic, and disjointedness live in the whole way of thinking of our contemporaries. This is the result of a blinding effect that natural science seems to have on contemporary humanity. Natural science has produced magnificent and admirable results with reference to the outer sense world; and in this context the people who had administered to the spiritual heritage of humanity felt driven back, more and more driven back. It did not go well, especially for certain theologians. It is incorrect to simply reject from the outset what humanity evolved through time as theology. There are deep, important basic truths in this theology, including about the human soul. Although these teachings must first be more clearly illuminated in many respects by spiritual science, still they contain basic truths. Only because these truths are not represented in a way that meets the needs of humanity today, the yearning for an answer to the spiritu-

al-scientific question must arise now in thinking people and feeling souls. But the theologians who did not want to be part of such spiritual-scientific efforts found themselves in a strange situation. They had truths, but these truths were not applicable to anything because the other sciences had taken the objects of these truths from them. The theologians had truths about the soul, but the soul was taken from them by natural science. And now perhaps theology proclaims truths with words, but it does not concern itself with the objects. It will even let the objects be investigated by natural science, because theologians are too comfortable in many respects to really take up natural science now. And that is what we must see as important in spiritual science: that this spiritual science takes up natural science completely; that it becomes involved in all that natural science has acquired and joins in by adding spiritual-scientific principles to the natural-scientific mode. The theologians did not want to do this; at times they are filled with a very strange conviction, precisely when it comes to retaining the objects.

A person who is seen as quite an extraordinary theologian in certain circles—both as a professor, which he used to be, and as a pastor—wrote a little book in which he gives an account of his religious talks.[‡] And in this little book he expresses thoughts through which we can, in an odd way, eavesdrop on him; we can see into the soul of an important person in our time. Indeed, however, I cannot say anything else but that one is stunned now and then by the kinds of thoughts an important person can promote! For instance, right away in this famous, important man's first lecture, he says that we must tackle natural science and give it back to open, rational people; one may keep only people of freedom as theologians. But even freedom becomes just a word in this sense! Does he not then say that he will have all of the contents of the soul transferred to natural science? Now he has not retained anything, except clever words, and he even gives a quaint reason for having this conviction; he simply says very dryly that he has this conviction. So a theologian who wanted to describe to his audience the most modern form of Christianity in these lectures says right away in the first lecture:

Human beings, as we encounter them in zoology—two-legged

Homo sapiens that evolved to standing, with a finely equipped spine and brain—are just as good as any other organic or inorganic form that is part of nature; are constructed of the same material, the same energy, the same atoms, with the same strength in effect and at work. The entire bodily life of human beings, however complicated it may still be, is determined by natural science in its entire composition, lawfully ordered as are all other animate and inanimate beings in nature. In this respect there is no difference whatsoever between human beings and a jellyfish, a drop of water, or a grain of sand.[‡]

Theological lectures, lectures by a theologian, a pastor! But this theologian talks in this way not only in regard to the body. He continues: “The *soul* functions, which are accessible through natural-scientific observation, are subject to laws just as strict as bodily processes; the feelings that we have and the ideas that we form are imposed on us by nature as well”—please, the feelings and ideas!—“as the nerve processes that lead to feelings of willingness or reluctance. They are mechanical presentations just like a steam engine.”[‡]

You see, the soul thus slips over to the natural scientists and this theologian retains only the old theological word-husk for which he finds sentences. The last pages, the last lectures, consist only of empty phrases to wrap what he talks about in theological word-husks. But then he explains the conviction of why he is so generous today in his devotion to objects. And here we catch a very strange conviction—just think, he says that theologians must act as he acts, must go even further—he says, “This certainty in the laws of nature in human beings applies not only to their bodily but also their *soul* functions. This is what we theologians never wanted to admit.”[‡] Only he is the exception, he has gone beyond this, he now admits it, “because we confused the natural-scientific concept of soul with the theological one, and feared unpleasant consequences for faith as a result.”

But now he has come so far that he admits he no longer fears any unpleasant consequences for faith! Then he says, “These come about precisely when we do not let science come to its full conclusion,”[‡] that is, he now says, “We should give in to science now; otherwise it

will have unpleasant consequences! Otherwise, this science will have horrible consequences.” And then we catch him in his truly strangest splendor: “because then we forfeit the trust of thinking people.”

There you have what this great theologian is striving for today! People—the most accomplished—have come, in all the ways that I have described to you today, to the feelings with which they turn their trust to us when we speak of the spiritual; we must not forfeit this, and thus not use the true inner soul strength that could be the basis of a spiritual insight! We see that if, when we detect what runs through people’s innermost being today, if we do not thoughtlessly pass over such things, then people today reveal themselves to be quite strange. We must have clear insights about this. We must not be surprised, given these clear insights, that if such thoughts are cultivated by those officially engaged in the religious and spiritual education of humanity today, we find it difficult to adapt to the world, considering all those who are radically opposed to us.

We must hold up for ourselves again and again the matter we are actually serving in the world by opposing the tempting thoughts that come today from such quarters with the only thoughts that can be fruitful. Such thoughts may always lift us from even the deepest depression again and again, and give us strength once more. Such thoughts are extremely important in every second of our lives. It is important that we conduct spiritual science in such a way that we show spiritual science outwardly as little as possible, but take it into ourselves so forcefully and intensively that we ourselves have the strength in the face of the tests it imposes on us to say to ourselves, “These tests must exist!” Because our karma has led us to spiritual science, we willingly take on what it imposes upon us in the form of tests. The conflicting forces contrary to spiritual science in the world today are terribly difficult, and people basically do not know this at all. Of course this man [A.W. Hunzinger] has no clue about the nature of thought and feeling. This can be revealed only when we have a clear view, through spiritual science, into the whole perniciousness and destructiveness of such thinking. This man has no awareness whatsoever of any of that! However, he cannot be assigned any blame because of this, nor be disregarded; and such a fact must be

taken quite objectively, like an earthquake, like a volcanic eruption, which also have destructive effects on humanity, though in a small area through outer physical means. But this man really cannot think.

And he is only one example of the most important people of our time who cannot think. He cannot think! Just imagine, he says that we of course give the human body to natural science; it does not work any other way because what should we theologians do with it? We cannot investigate the body, after all. This man has no idea of the fact that the spirit, when we really investigate it, is co-builder of the body, that the body simply cannot be separated and given away in this manner, as I explained yesterday in the public lecture.[‡] This man gives away the body, but he also gives away the soul. Because it experiences in the same way as a steam engine, he retains, as he says explicitly, only the “person of freedom”—what is free in the human being—for theology. He magnanimously gives away the “person as nature”;[‡] he retains the “person of freedom.” But now, after he has kept the person of freedom, he openly says, “‘human beings as nature,’ as a part of nature, lose their independence and freedom; everything they experience is suffering; they must suffer absolutely according to the law of nature.”

Thus human beings lose their freedom through their nature. And now just think what else this theologian is keeping! First, he says, he gives people as nature to nature, and retains the person of freedom; but then he states that the person as nature is such that people lose independence and freedom as a part of nature, and “everything they experience is suffering; must suffer absolutely according to the law of nature.” Now he has nothing more at all! Thus we cannot be surprised that Hunzinger speaks only in empty phrases from here on. But the good man does not notice this at all, and he is a typical example of how the most important people today notice nothing of the discontinuity of the thinking that has influence now. Humanity has arrived at a stage of evolution in which the thinking that should take place about physical life must be fructified by the thoughts that also have to do with the spiritual world; otherwise these thoughts will break apart at all the points where they correspond to the physical world, because the people who have a say today are not familiar with the simplest facts regarding world conditions.

We know that people are in a transitional period today. We do not mean this in the superficial sense in which people now speak of transitional periods, but in another sense. We are in the transitional period in which the old atavistic-clairvoyant instincts have died away, and in which conscious entrance into the spiritual worlds must be achieved. That is an obvious fact for spiritual scientists. The old atavistic-clairvoyant abilities that people had also gave them powerful thoughts. History tells little of these powerful thoughts, which greatly influenced human life in the Chaldean cultural epoch and the Egyptian cultural epoch. However little they stand up today in our estimation, they did stand up in that time. Influential thoughts—our time must recover thoughts again that are capable of influencing reality! But they can do so only if they are also fructified by the spiritual world, as thoughts were in ancient times. But people today are not made fruitful by way of the unconscious. Thus consciousness must arise if people are to really accept spiritual-scientific knowledge.

And even this man, in whom we can detect so easily the fact that he is deeply affected by the worst damage from the thoughtlessness of our time, and the fact that he causes immeasurable damage by infecting so many people with his thoughtlessness—even he is not a malevolent person. He is actually an insightful person. He is a person who does have the insight that people can have in our time, even if they are not able to progress in a certain way to the true spiritual world in the sense that I have talked about. Even people such as Jaurès cannot make such progress. But such people as this man who gave these religious lectures, even such people know that humanity has come to a dead end in a certain way; that we cannot continue with the thinking, feeling, and willing of the old convictions, the elements of the old worldview. And he also knows that this has led to materialism in recent times, and he knows that things must change. He is actually fundamentally quite radical because he talks about nineteenth century culture causing people to have concepts such as the craze for sports, convenience, and material possessions. This man speaks of all of these things, which are shadow sides of materialism; he speaks of all of them, and he is absolutely ready to say that the craze for sports, convenience and possessions as they appeared in the

nineteenth century must be combated.

But he has only empty phrases for what he says here, because the following, “we believe our eyes; we do not believe our powers of knowledge,” is found at the end of the first lecture. And so, an important, famous man today says the following. First, he says, quite correctly, that all things that happen here must be given another assessment; “they should no longer be the ultimate goal. There must no longer be salesmen for whom earning money is the end in itself; the enjoyment of life must no longer be the substance of life; there must no longer be people who live only for their health.”

Thus he is very radical. We will certainly not claim such radical things to be from the spiritual-scientific standpoint; rather we will leave people their own freedom, and we know that if they understand karma and reincarnation and the rest that spiritual science contributes, they will find their way in the world. But this man who knows that people have gotten themselves into a dead end, says quite radically—it would be quite different if he took up spiritual science—that people should not earn money anymore, should not enjoy life anymore, should not live for their health anymore. Once I visited a sanatorium for people suffering from nervous diseases. It was run by a well-known man. I could see whole droves of patients marching past as they went to lunch. It appeared to me that the sickest, most fidgety person suffering from a nervous disease was the noted director of the hospital himself! (This is one case in a thousand.) Our theologian, however, is radical: he says that the substance of life must be different; no one must live simply for health anymore; and so on. But then he ends his lecture with the following lines: “That means everything we have been doing until now must still be *done*, but we must *think* differently while doing it.”‡

This is reforming life! Imagine! This is reforming life for a person who looks so deeply into what is necessary: Everything must become different; that is, nothing itself needs to change, but our thinking about everything must change. “These things must not represent the most inner aspect, the goal, the highest value. We must *strive* for them with the same energy; we must *judge*”—that is, think of—“them on a different scale than before.”‡

Now, one need add nothing to these things! It is necessary that we direct our attention to these things because they are present not only in one person, they are present today in our whole civilized world. And what people experience in their destiny comes from nothing more than this deficiency of thought and feeling; that is the karma of this deficiency of thought and feeling! We must first turn our attention to this, and as spiritual scientists must find the way not to listen to what soars and surges through the world today and what is accepted as being “of the highest value” by other impulses. We must really be able, rather, in this context to examine these main things, because they do have influence. We must do this without letting ourselves become befuddled by all sorts of other feelings that rule the world today and under whose influence today so many lies are told. We live in such a climate—I have said this before in Zurich—that this man, who hands down such rubbish to people so that by listening to him “these thought-beasts” enter into hearts and minds, is allowed to say, “This little book consists of twelve speeches that I gave last winter in...”[‡]—and now comes the city, which I do not want to name[‡]—“to more than a thousand attendees.”

But—which city is quite trivial—this is happening now by the thousands! This must be understood. And it is necessary that we really lay the whole gravity and meaning of such a view before our souls.

After we have taken much from the spiritual world, we must realize what it should be to us, and through this also realize that we are to a certain extent looking at the counter-image of the worldview that is much more dominant in people today than we believe. Sadly, people live much too thoughtlessly today! That is what is such a hardship for the soul: to have to examine—forgive me for having to say this, but we must recognize it clearly—the mindlessness so widely spread in the world, the stupor in which humanity lives in relation to what has an effect and control in the evolutionary process of humanity. We must also retain the necessary nuances of feeling for the sort of truth that is in spiritual science by asking for these nuances of feeling through our examination of the counter-image. What is important, therefore, is not the search for all sorts of beautiful words that sound

good, as if they came from high ideals, to be presented to humanity. Rather, of primary importance is the recognition of what our best contemporaries cannot recognize: that it is the spiritual world that must be opened up.

There are good reasons—and these reasons cannot be explained here because it would take too long—there are good reasons that for centuries humanity has resisted understanding Christianity in the spiritual sense. There was gnosis in the first centuries of Christianity. You all know that our spiritual science is not a revival of Gnosticism. Gnosticism made the first attempts in those days to arrive at a spiritual science;[‡] but it was driven back because people did not want to see Christian truths in a spiritual light. This same bias continued and has become part of the natural-scientific method. Humanity has learned something from this, and has fought the possibility of understanding the spiritual for centuries.

But today the time has arrived when it is the most difficult for those who are very much part of contemporary culture (which is actually materialism, even though people do not admit it) to recognize a true spiritual world; that is, not just to talk vaguely about the spiritual world, but to recognize the spiritual world through examination. We must get it clear in our minds, however, that the recognition of this spiritual world is one of the most important things. Only then can the rest of it come—what must come in the form of a new basis of the ethical, social, and other practical orders of life—when we lay the groundwork through spiritual science and the knowledge of true spiritual facts and spiritual entities.

It was a great satisfaction to me that we could be together once again here in St. Gallen after a long time;[‡] and I therefore saw it as my task specifically on this day to add to what you can learn from our literature, something of what must be talked about within our movement, perhaps personally from soul to soul, so that it can be understood correctly. Because within our movement it matters that we do not simply take up this or that idea from spiritual science in a catechism-like way; rather, it matters that we find the correct relationship of our souls to the knowledge from the spiritual world. Then spiritual science will be not only a science to us, but it will also

truly become a way of life for us; it will be soul sustenance for us. It will be a soul sustenance that does not undermine our spiritual health and spiritual refreshment. Rather it will stimulate us in a way that we can still adapt harmoniously to the world, despite all the resistance from the outside world, which we have sought to understand to some extent today. I wanted to speak to you today about how we should interact on a soul level with spiritual science. If it was necessary to present contemporary phenomena, which can perhaps be illuminated by spiritual science only in this way, it was because only clear and plain insight into the course and development of the world in which we live will lead us as adherents of the anthroposophical worldview to the correct inner attitude and harmony. And from this inner harmony, harmony will arise in our lives. Indeed, our spiritual-scientific ideal is for this harmony to affect our lives through spiritual science more and more. I wanted to give you a small contribution today according to the spirit of this ideal.