

CHAPTER II

THE HOLY SPIRIT & THE SOPHIA

THE SAGA OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

WHEN WE STUDY the history of human cognition, we find that a problem runs through this history, as an unbroken thread, concerning the common source of the outer world and human consciousness. The cosmic Godhead in relation to the world and humanity was, and ever will be, the most important question for earthly humanity. Since the moment of the birth of thought this question has been answered in various ways. But, regardless of how manifold the answers to the question may be (apart from Atheism, which is a manifestation of spiritual disease rather than knowledge), they may ultimately be combined into three categories. The Godhead may be considered pantheistically, theistically, or deistically; it is the cosmic entity in itself, or it guides the universe it has created from outside, or it is the creative being at rest above the universe who, having created the world, has lost interest in its fate. In the first instance, we have the Godhead of all consciousness, enlightening the world and all life that flows through the currents of the world; in the second, we have the highest being with whom humankind is confronted; in the third, we have the transcendental originator of the cosmic system present in the cosmos, the same way a watchmaker is present in the constructed watch. These views depend on certain basic feelings that are peculiar to human souls in their views of life. One soul feels inundated and irradiated by the divine; another has the experience, as an independent being, of confronting the divine in free exchange; and yet another feels neither the flow of the divine in the cosmos nor its revelations in free interaction, but merely a memory of the divine as the rational principle that governs the universe. Those who hold these fundamental conceptions often stand in irreconcilable opposition, believing that the truth of their own view un.masks that of the other as mistaken. Thus, the pantheist views the theistic concept of God as anthropomorphic; the theist regards the pantheistic concept as naturalistic and vague; and both reject the concept of a deist (say, Voltaire) as an insubstantial abstraction. The deist, on the other hand, considers both the other concepts unscientific and philosophically unsound.

Real Christianity, however, means more than preaching peace; in truth, it brings peace into the conflict of ideas. The Christian idea of God—the “three in one,” which is really the view of God taught through the holy wisdom of the primal mysteries—is a concept in which deist, theist, and pantheist can all clasp hands in friendship. The light of the Christian Trinity reveals that a deist acknowledges only the Father, a theist only the Son, and, with the same exclusiveness, a pantheist stands for only the Holy Spirit. All three representatives of these fundamental ideas of the Godhead are correct insofar as they say something positive, but they are wrong to the degree that they refuse to acknowledge other viewpoints. In fact, the Godhead dwells outside the course of world events, is present as the highest example for all beings in the world, and also flows and vibrates through all that exists. The threefold Godhead is the highest point to which human thinking can soar and find rest; it is the highest view that the human heart can grasp and that human beings can acknowledge with their whole being. But people must not assume that they can gain a true idea of the Trinity by only one path. They will never find the Trinity by devoting themselves entirely to the study of outer nature; that path leads only to recognition of the Father. And those who devote themselves solely to observing their own inner life will gain an idea of the Holy Spirit’s universal power. But those who study the outer as well as the inner worlds, beginning with the question of what is lacking in the outer world and what is missing in the inner world—not asking what is *present*, but what is missing from the universe and from humankind—will attain a cosmic concept of the Son.

A gaze directed reverently toward the source of consciousness and life must lead to recognition of the Holy Spirit; an observant, perceptive gaze directed to the outer world leads to conviction of the Father’s existence, the Creator, to whom his work, displayed to perceptive insight, points; but a gaze that views with warm sympathy the misery and imperfection of life leads to certainty of the Son. Whenever piety is lacking in the soul, the Holy Spirit becomes merely an abstract concept; when truth is weak in courage, the Father cannot be acknowledged; and when there is no love in life, the Son cannot be confessed. To acknowledge the Three in One means being able to soar aloft, to see life in a religious, objective, and therapeutic way. Christianity confronts humankind with this claim when the idea of the Trinity is placed before us.

If the paths leading to acknowledgment of the three persons of the Trinity are different, so also are the inner processes that bring about the acknowledgment of each person of the Trinity. Thus the Father cannot be fully understood, but only acknowledged. The *activity* of the Father can bring strength to human beings, but the earthly, physical human eye cannot see the Father himself. The Father’s activity is revealed in human beings, in that the soul is pervaded alternately by light and by darkness from above. When a soul is first illumined and then plunged into darkness and silence, the strength that remains in the soul after these states is the strength of the Father’s activity. The Father reveals himself neither in light nor in silent darkness, but through light *and* darkness. The direct experience (as distinct from acknowledgment in thought) of the Father being that is possible to human beings on Earth is confined to the experience of his activity

in the alternation of highest happiness and deepest loneliness. One cannot know the inner repose of the soul that reflects the repose of the Father in heaven unless one also knows both the bliss of ineffable clarity when the soul is illumined by the spirit and the indescribable loneliness of the soul waiting motionless like a ship with sagging sails in a dead calm, with no urge to action or perception. This repose is the human experience of the Father; it is this that makes people strong for the trials of life and death. It is the vertical adjustment of the human will, which forms one into a pillar, as it were, that unites heaven and Earth. Thus, in the time of world war, Rudolf Steiner stood as a pillar of will power, imperturbable as the storms raged about him. It was the *reality in life* in the words of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done, in Earth as it is in heaven." This was expressed in the attitude of Rudolf Steiner's soul.

Nor can the Holy Spirit become an object of perceptive knowledge; for it is the activity of the Holy Spirit that is behind such knowledge and makes it possible. The Holy Spirit is the light that illuminates consciousness in perceiving, making visible the objects of perception. Therefore, we never read of *knowing* the Holy Spirit, but only of being "filled with the Holy Spirit." Human beings cannot experience a *meeting* with the Holy Spirit; one can only be filled inwardly with his light. Then, in this light, one recognizes the objects, processes, and beings of the universe. But then it is not the Holy Spirit we recognize, but the cosmic objects, processes, and beings *through* the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always flowing through and irradiating all beings; everyone is interpenetrated continually by the Holy Spirit, but people fail to notice this simply because the current of the Spirit's activity is not intercepted by one's consciousness. When this happens in such a way that the "I" becomes the focus for the Holy Spirit's light, people are "filled with the Holy Spirit." In our present era, the manifestation of this condition is not the same as it was in ages past, when the phrase was coined. In the present age, it no longer means "speaking in tongues," but rather a condition of the greatest possible clarity and certainty in the knowledge of the great spiritual and moral questions of existence. Human beings simply acquire a much stronger light of consciousness than they possessed before. One becomes more awake, and this heightened wakefulness (which makes ordinary consciousness seem like idle dreaming) is the modern means of being "filled with the Holy Spirit." The fact that this fullness reveals itself simultaneously as calm bliss does not in any way change the fact that the condition is a heightening of waking consciousness.

It is different for knowledge of the Son; a meeting occurs between a human being and the Son, in which the Son stands before one as an example. Such a meeting results from the attitude toward the universe and the life we have called therapeutic. We encounter the Son when we ask what is lacking in the universe. This is not an abstract problem but a combination of many concrete, living questions, all expressing the condition of a soul that makes an effort not to find life perfect but to *make* it perfect. Similarly, for instance, we can study stones, the mineral kingdom, beginning with the question: What is in a stone? This will lead to understanding the principles of the mineral kingdom as constituted in the present cosmic epoch. We can also study the mineral kingdom starting with the question: What is lacking in it? What is missing that should be present? We

should perceive that the stone is cold, that it is without the warmth it possessed long ago during the period of ancient Saturn. Warmth left the earth later on with the Sun, and the mineral matter that was left cold became stones. So we recognize the mineral kingdom as a manifestation of the cosmic process of disease. And we realize that what it needs to return to its true condition is that warmth of will spoken of in the Gospel when Jesus Christ speaks the significant words that faith can move mountains. Mountains are motionless simply because they have been deprived of the original will fire of ancient Saturn, and it is humanity's mission to restore to the mineral kingdom this fire that becomes faith as it passes through the human "I."

If we investigate the plant world with the same insight, we see that the light is missing in it—light that once belonged to it during the cosmic epoch of the ancient Sun and then, later, left the Earth with the Sun. Since then, the plant longs for light, and the Sun bestows it from above, but its true condition is attained only when it is bearing sunlight within itself. The true yearning of the plant world is not exhausted in the mere aspiration that the Sun should shine upon it, but extends to a desire that plants should have sunshine internally. The plant world is a visible expression of the manifold desire of the terrestrial organism to be reunited with the Sun. But this desire of the Earth is without hope unless human beings allow the love light of the Sun to radiate through and out of them.

Next, if we direct a therapeutic glance toward the speechless animal world, we realize that it lives in the dim hope of one day surrendering entirely to the word, so that it may be able to no longer live by vague instinct but under the guidance of the clear thought impulses. The obedience of domestic animals to human beings is an instinctive expression of this hope; the animal world desires to become an effective force of active thought, the Word.

And even human beings themselves reveal to such a glance what is lacking in them as well. The fact that people think points to the fundamental condition behind their existence—that the meaning of this existence has not been granted directly to humankind. We would not need to busy ourselves with thinking if the revelations of thinking were given to us directly. If the meaning of life already lived in human consciousness, we would indeed direct our activities in accordance with it, but we would not look for it through thinking. What human beings need in order to be *human* in the truest sense of the word is to have the living presence of life's meaning within. The fall of both humankind and the kingdoms of nature provides knowledge of what has thus been lost. The fall into sin is visible in the three kingdoms of nature and in humanity, because each of these four realms of existence must be completed before its true condition is reached. However, we combine them and ask: What is lacking in Nature and Man? The complete answer to this question is true humanity.

True humanity is lacking in terrestrial existence; it can complete, or redeem, all the beings on Earth. Long ago, all terrestrial beings arose from the great human being, Adam Cadmon, and all earthly beings still long for what they lost at that time. If the animal kingdom is stunted humanity, and if the plant and mineral kingdoms are in a

similar condition, then the redemption of those kingdoms is not possible until they are restored to their lost human condition. But earthly human beings have also fallen. They, too, represent a stunted manifestation of the true human being, Adam Cadmon. Thus, earthly humankind is the stage in terrestrial existence whereon the longing of all creatures attains consciousness of itself. The fact that human beings stand erect upon feet is a phenomenon in the course of natural events, signifying that the cosmic tragedy of congealing stones, the darkened yearning of the plants, the dumb hope of the animals have all become a conscious effort toward redemption. But for human beings to fully recognize their responsibility toward nature, they must take one very conscious step—that of fully recognizing their own imperfection as stunted, fallen human beings. Not until this recognition has taken place will humankind become fully alive to its responsibility. Rudolf Steiner describes the process of this recognition in *How to Know Higher Worlds*, in which he pictures the meeting with the one called the “Lesser Guardian of the Threshold.”¹

The test of this encounter is that human beings should know themselves just as they have become because of the Fall. Knowledge of one’s nature as it has become leads us to knowledge of what we will become. Those who can endure the recognition of the stunted human will thus be led to realize true humanity. If that cognition is experienced in full consciousness, it becomes that meeting with the Son described in *How to Know Higher Worlds* as the meeting with the “Greater Guardian of the Threshold.” If this encounter is not accompanied by the control of *all* the forces of perception, cognition, and memory in the soul, then the meeting with the Son is less definitely conscious; nonetheless, it gives one’s soul an imperturbable certainty in the recognition of Christ as the meaning of the Earth.

This encounter with the Son is for human beings an objective event in cognition. In it, we encounter our archetype with perceptive recognition. At the same time, we also recognize that this is the archetype for all earthly being, because within it is hidden the warmth, the light, and the word, for which the three kingdoms of nature yearn. It is in the character of the “new Adam,” the resurrected Adam Cadmon, that the Son meets the human being. But this figure is not just an archetype to humankind; it is also an archetype to all the beings of the spiritual hierarchies, because there is something lacking even in the beings of the spiritual hierarchies. What is lacking in them must be brought into their sphere of existence by humanity. It is the mission of the fourth hierarchy, humankind, to satisfy the essential need of the first, second, and third hierarchies. That need is the *freedom* that will have achieved its cosmic destiny once it has overcome karma in the universe. This is the desire of the beings of the higher hierarchies, but to bring it to pass they require the help of human beings. Only a blind, earthly human being can annul the karmic consequences of the blindness of any other terrestrial human being. The higher hierarchic beings cannot do this, but they desire it so that the law of justice can be established through love, to the very ends of the natural world. This, however, can be accomplished only by incarnate human beings, yet they will not do it, because, since the Fall, the will has been the evil element in human nature. Consequently, the will of

the Son, revealing himself as the highest *elohim*, is the highest example of love given to humanity; and thus, on the other hand, the power of the highest *elohim*—previously becoming and now having become human—is the highest example for the beings of the spiritual hierarchies. The divine human is the evolutionary ideal of all beings in the universe, spiritual as well as earthly. In a certain sense, all spiritual beings strive to become human in the sense of having the power to overcome karma; but the task of humankind is to become divine, to absorb the divine love into the human will.

Ezekiel recognized this central truth of the universe when he saw, as the center of his cosmic vision of the hierarchy of the Holy Spirit, the Son enthroned in “the likeness of a man.” No doubt, he saw this archetypal picture prophetically, as a cosmic purpose for the future, because at the time the Christ had not yet become human; but he saw it as the center of the sublime tableau of the activity of the Holy Spirit, directed toward the fulfillment of this purpose.

If we study more closely the central figure of Ezekiel’s vision by the River Chebar (Ezekiel I:3), we find that this figure presents a certain answer to the question of existence asked by nature and humanity. The aspect missing in nature and humankind is contained in this figure. The various elements of the figure are those we have already mentioned as absent from nature and humankind. Ezekiel not only speaks of one in “the likeness of a Man,” but also speaks of the *voice* that sounds above the four cherubim where the throne is set and on which the one sits who has a human likeness. He speaks, too, of *fire* that shines in glowing metal in the limbs of the one who is like a human being, and finally of the *light* proceeding from him, like “the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain.”

The true, divine, human countenance, the voice sounding above the beings that represent the four group souls, the metallic fire and the light—these four elements that complete the central figure of Ezekiel’s vision are precisely those of the essential gifts missing from the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms of the Earth, for which all terrestrial beings are longing. The “metallic fire” of the limb system, or will, that he saw is that warmth of will that the mineral kingdom lost at the fall of humankind; the light he saw gleaming in rainbow colors is the light for which the plant world has been yearning since Earth’s severance from the Sun; the voice that sounds above the group souls is the Word, the hope of all animal existence; and the divine human countenance is the image of the goal of all true earthly human effort.

Ezekiel thus established a true image of the meaning of earthly existence for the future “reader”—that is, for the inspired cognition of future generations. He did this as a “Son of Man,” by which title he is always addressed in the spiritual world, and this has a very definite significance.² Rudolf Steiner gave the explanation of this title, in relation to the Gospels: “Son of Man” represents a future condition of consciousness that will be born from the present consciousness as its posterity, or “Son.” In this sense, therefore, “Man” represents the four members of the human being—the physical body, ether body, astral body, and “I” being. “Son of Man,” on the other hand, would indicate one who experiences and represents also the *manas* principle, the spirit self, as a fifth member. This

was exactly the case with Ezekiel. It was not just because of the subject of his revelations that he lived in the future, but also because he was able to perceive and know it by means of this additional member belonging to the human being of the future. And the whole fundamental character of his revelation depends upon this fact.

To begin with, his revelations refer to the highest, he who is enthroned above the cherubim, and then they descend as far as to human concerns. This descending scale of cognition is very much characteristic of the cognition of the “Son of Man,” or *manas* cognition. In study 9, “David and Solomon,” we spoke of this characteristic; here we need only to show why the reader, together with the author, will have to follow a descending path in continuing the study of Ezekiel’s revelations. In order to be clear about an important point, however, there is one more thing to mention before we move on. The descending scale of cognition indicated here has nothing in common with speculation and is, in fact, its very opposite. Speculation (philosophic speculation, for instance) begins with experience of our lower world and draws conclusions by threads of analogy about the higher world. But in “descending cognition,” binding threads are drawn from the higher world to the lower. It is distinct from speculation in that it endeavors to perceive the events and facts of the lower world by means of the higher, whereas speculation typically explains the higher world by means of the lower. To see this clearly is even more important, because today there is a great deal of confusion about this. Today the prophets and the Apocalypse are often explained by merely projecting the content of our lower world into them. Consequently, sectarian, pseudo-scientific interpretations arise that have nothing at all to do with the revelations themselves, because their meaning cannot be found in this world. The pictures and parables of the revelations must speak for themselves; if they are silent, every interpretation arbitrarily projected into them from the substance of ordinary experience is really no more than an arbitrary interpretation.

If we are to understand the complete tableau of Ezekiel’s vision, it is not enough to understand only the central figure; in conjunction with the central figure we must also study all the various details of the vision. These details refer to specific beings of the spiritual hierarchies and to the particular ways they function. We must, therefore, first get a clearer idea of the beings referred to and of their activities.

In our tenth meditation, events of the Old Testament period of human spiritual history were described in general as an expression of this thought: At that time, the Father was active in the destiny in which the Holy Spirit was preparing the birth of the Son. The second part of this sentence (“in which the Holy Spirit was preparing the birth of the Son”) contains the whole meaning of Ezekiel’s vision at the River Chebar, up to the point where commissions destined for those around him were laid upon him. The vision shows the Son at the center of the Holy Spirit’s activity. All the incidental figures surrounding the central one are related to this activity. As we have shown, the Holy Spirit in his own nature cannot be an object of cognition; his activity can be recognized only through beings appointed to that end. The nature of the Holy Spirit at that time was filling Ezekiel himself, who was the *subject* of the cognition; it could not therefore be at the same time its *object*. This is the condition expressed in the Bible by the words “the hand of the Lord was

upon him.” The Hand of God, therefore, was upon Ezekiel from the first moment of his visions (Ezekiel 1:3), and it was these that were made possible by this “Hand.”

The activity of the Holy Spirit we are considering extends to all the hierarchies, yet there are hierarchies that are united with him in a particular sense. Just as the archangels, *elohim*, and *seraphim*, for example, represent the Son in a special way, the angels, *dynamoi* (spirits of motion), and *cherubim* represent the Holy Spirit. They in particular fulfill the cosmic mission of the Holy Spirit, whereas other hierarchies have devoted themselves to the fulfillment of the missions set up in the cosmos by the Son and the Father. The mission of the Holy Spirit to incarnate human beings involves filling them with the light of consciousness, which, in its least clouded form, manifests in human *thought*. This light is a gift to human beings; we can freely use it or misuse it. Human beings can either freely subject their will to it or, conversely, master it through the will, which works through misusing the light of consciousness. But however people use it, they owe every influx of the light of consciousness to that source, which we know as the Holy Spirit.

Now, before this light reaches humankind, it is worked upon by the spiritual hierarchies, and brought down to humanity in such a way that human beings are able to endure it. *Three* hierarchies in particular are concerned with bringing the light of consciousness to human beings: the *cherubim*, the *dynamoi*, and the angels. The *cherubim* breathe out light, radiating eternal light toward the material world. The *dynamoi* control the strength of their action in the human world. The angels guide the various beams of this light to human individuals. If the angels’ activity were to fall away from this joint process, individual differences in the inner current of the light of human consciousness would disappear; everyone would simultaneously receive the same effect of the light, without distinction of color, quantity, or epoch. Most human beings would be blinded by the white light of surging consciousness. If the activity of the *dynamoi* were to fail, humanity would grow rigid in the light of eternity and stand breathless in the light of eternal stillness; every movement would die away, making progress along the path of human evolution impossible.

Humanity depends on the spiritual hierarchies, just as the hierarchies depend on one another. The angels rescue humankind not only from a complete darkening of consciousness of life in the material realm, but also from the blinding of consciousness by the direct, unmediated light of spirit. The spirits of motion add the power of movement, or progress, to the *cherubim*’s eternal light. The *cherubim* radiate light into the dark material world—the light that flows from the eternal Trinity. The angels represent the light of the Holy Spirit at the ultimate end of its activity in relation to the confines of darkness; they are literally the “Sons of Twilight.”³ They represent the many nearby eyes of the spiritual world directed toward earthly matters. An eye of the spiritual world, one’s guardian angel, rests on each human being. No one is forgotten; the eye of God (to use the language of religion) really does rest on every human individual. And it is not just an observing eye; it is an enlightening, irradiating eye. The angels not only have the task of recording what they see of the minds and actions of human beings for the higher ones of

the spiritual world, they must also bring word to humankind concerning the purposes and activities of the beings in the spiritual worlds. They are “messengers,” both for the world of the hierarchies and for the world of earthly humanity. They continually work to move the souls of earthly humanity in harmony with the great cosmic purposes; they try to bring the stirrings of human souls into consonance with the great cosmic impulses. Nevertheless, the great cosmic impulses originate especially in the hierarchy of the dynamoi, or spirits of motion. It is these spirits who give the real force to the supreme light of wisdom.

The impelling force of the dynamoi must be mentioned, because they renounced their share in the evolution of this force; their “dynamic force” must be seen as an activity that merely awakens longing, not as “movement.” It is Ahriman who moves beings “dynamically”; Lucifer moves them through allurement. The dynamoi, however, move beings on the paths found for them through the yearning for the light of the true, the beautiful and the good. The history of great cosmic yearning—from birth to fulfillment—is also the history of a certain cosmic evolutionary cycle. Thus, for example, the Earth, as the fourth evolutionary cycle, is essentially (from the polarian epoch to the period of its transition to the pralaya condition) the history of a particular cosmic longing that entered the stream of cosmic events with the fall of humankind; it received the hope of fulfillment in the Mystery of Golgotha. We have already tried to describe this longing; now the point is to recognize its connection with the activity of the spirits of motion. Its cycles of movement are revelations of the spirits of motion. These cycles, were also called “wheels” (*rotae*), so that the spirits of motion may be spoken of as “wheels” whose rims are full of eyes; the angels are the “eyes” on the rims of the dynamoi’s wheels.

Encouraging movement, the activity of the dynamoi, is conditioned by the cherubim, who radiate the light of *harmony* in accordance with which the dynamoi activate longing. The spirits of harmony (as Rudolf Steiner names the cherubim in *An Outline of Esoteric Science*) provide the *substance* of the yearning of all beings. They reveal the archetype of harmonized humanity, the complete human being, to humankind. But human beings are not harmonized unless the four members of their being are in harmony; the “I” must be allied with, not in conflict with, the astral, etheric, and physical human being. The language of primal occult symbolism would say that harmonious human beings have the “human,” the “eagle,” the “lion,” and the “bull” in equilibrium within. The human being has four forces: human forces in front, eagle forces behind, bull forces on the left, and lion forces on the right. Those who are harmonized are ready to attain an even higher state, since harmonizing is the preliminary requirement for the entry to a higher force. Before the person of harmony can become a person of love, the four essential human forces must provide a stage for the fifth. Once the Holy Spirit has brought about the harmonizing of the human being, the time has come for the Son’s birth. Once an earthly human organism has realized the archetype of the cherubim, the Son, or Christ, it will be born on Earth. But before this could happen, the history of Israel (as Ezekiel perceived) had to be continued in a certain direction. Ezekiel’s mission developed out of the perception of *how* it had to be continued.

If we take the text and examine it sentence by sentence, Ezekiel's vision at the River Chebar will become understandable. Nevertheless, for lack of space we cannot do that here. Instead, the author hopes that by now the task will not be too difficult for the reader, who will be able to understand the coherence of every sentence in Ezekiel's description if the fundamental truth of the revelation has been understood—that Ezekiel sees the activity of the Holy Spirit through the cherubim, the dynamoi, and the angels, and that the goal of that activity is the birth of the Son in a harmonious human organism. This birth of the Son, however, means to fulfill the desire of all earthly beings—not just humankind, but all the kingdoms of nature.

The vision of Ezekiel, therefore, represents one of the most valuable documents possessed by humanity, because it contains such specific information concerning the function of the Holy Spirit. In connection with these considerations (especially those dealing with the various methods and types of cognition related to the three persons of the Trinity) a question arises: If various methods and qualities of soul are needed to recognize the Father, to perceive the Son, and to acknowledge the Spirit, how does one perceive the Trinity as a unity? Is it possible to receive undivided wisdom—not just a combination of three different forms of perceptive knowledge gained by different means, but perception leading to a view that synthesizes the whole? This leads us to consider an important spiritual fact in Old Testament history by examining the nature and function of the Sophia.

THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE SOPHIA IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

Rudolf Steiner once spoke of the various kinds of perception of Jesus Christ in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. The West, he said, recognized especially the human Jesus of Nazareth; Central Europe, by contrast, regarded the Christ impulse to be a universal myth-forming spiritual current; and Eastern Europe comprehended the fact that Jesus Christ is both God and human. In relation to this, Steiner mentioned three men as representatives of these three spiritual tendencies: Joseph Ernest Renan, David Friedrich Strauss, and Vladimir Solovyov.⁴ These reflections by Rudolf Steiner provided this author with a strong impulse to closely study the work of Vladimir Solovyov. A result was the conviction that this author had never encountered a work written before the time of Rudolf Steiner that contained such a profound concept of the nature and mission of Jesus Christ, a view presented against the background of cosmic history. That study included, for example, Solovyov's *Lectures on Divine Humanity*,⁵ the deepest and most comprehensive statement on this subject before Steiner's works. For this very reason, however, a question now arose: How did Solovyov come to this amazing cognition of the more profound mysteries of the Son and even the divine Trinity as a whole? In studying all the works of Solovyov, we find no actual path or method leading to this perceptive

knowledge. We can indeed follow his thoughts and thereby be convinced of their truth, but the works of Solovyov offer no explanation as to how we can reach similar new knowledge. One has this knowledge, or one does not; this is the only answer we can gather from Solovyov's writings.

Nevertheless, the impression remains that Solovyov gained his knowledge on quite a different path from the one he follows to make it understandable to others. For him, the language of thought is *only* a language; he states the facts of cognition in crystal-clear logic, but he did not receive them along the path of logic. *How* they have come to him, however, we do not learn from Solovyov's works, but from his biography. In his poem "Three Conversations," he uses his humor and wit to protect what is greatest and holiest in his life from the ill-natured wit of others.⁶ He speaks of the three suprasensory experiences he had in 1862, 1875, and 1876. The first experience came to him as a boy during divine service in church. The being appeared to him then whom, fourteen years later, he came to know in another form as the Mother of God. He had the second experience while doing research in the British Museum in London on certain questions related to the sources of human spiritual history. On that occasion, he heard the inner word, which directed him to Egypt, where in the loneliness of the wilderness he had his third, decisive experience. He saw—and immediately understood what he saw—the cosmic Sophia being as a revelation of the Wisdom of God. This experience was the true source of Solovyov's "philosophy"; the remainder of his work was merely a struggle to form his thoughts so that the essence of what he had seen might be *told*.

What did Solovyov see in the Egyptian desert? Who is the Sophia? The Sophia is no abstract concept or merely a pious, mystical state of mind, but an actual archangelic being who performs a particular spiritual task. A part of this special mission is the anticipatory manas revelation, given through certain individuals. Various other beings are also involved in this revelation, but it is Sophia who brings about the revelation by means of which the *unity* of the Trinity (and also the unity of the three occultisms) becomes perceptible. For humankind, Sophia does not represent separate cognitions in distinct areas, but the knowledge of what gives meaning to all cognitions. Indeed, the separate cognitions—insofar as they do not serve practical purposes—have only the meaning of an alphabet by which the sublime cosmic mysteries of the Trinity may be read.

The total knowledge of those mysteries, by which the temple of the universe is built and whose stones are the separate cognitions, is imparted by the Sophia, called (in the language of the Bible) the "Wisdom of God." The plan of the temple was drawn up before the building was done; the *Wisdom* was there as a whole before wisdom-filled objects and processes came into being. Solomon, the builder of the temple in Jerusalem, expressed this when he put these words into the mouth of Wisdom:

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. . . . When he prepared the heavens I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the depth. . . . When he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him. (Proverbs: 8:22–30)

“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars” (Proverbs 9:1). For Solomon, this is wisdom that speaks and builds, a “master worker” with God. Thus Solomon understands it not merely as a sum of knowledge but as an actual spiritual being. That being of whom Solomon speaks, and whom Solovyov saw, is the same hierarchical being who, during the first centuries of Christian era, was called Sophia by the Gnostics. For humankind, the “house” of Sophia is the complete knowledge of the plan for building the universe and one with the goals of evolution. We encounter this “house” in Rudolf Steiner’s mystery dramas, as “the suprasensory Temple of Wisdom,” from which arise the high impulses of the three initiates, the characters of Benedictus, Theodosius, and Romanus. The temple has stood since primeval times; it is the place of initiation of human souls; to “enter” it means simply to acquire the knowledge of the sublime plan of cosmic evolution. To be initiated does not mean to know all things; no one can do that, not even the beings of the spiritual hierarchies. It means, rather, to perceive in a single survey the main outline of the evolutionary movement of everything. This survey is made possible by the suprasensory “buildings” of the Temple of Wisdom, constructed on the lines of *intuition*. The “buildings” of the temple (if we imagine them as visible shapes) form an inverted bowl, out of which the seven streams of revelation flow. These streams are the pillars of the temple, and the bowl is its dome. The seven pillars of the House of Wisdom, about which Solomon spoke, are also seven paths, or methods, of absorbing the streaming contents of the bowl, or the temple’s dome.

What we understand as “logic” is, in fact, one of these streams, directed downward from above. When this stream reaches the conscious “I” point, real Aristotelian logic begins. But when the stream of logic is brought even lower by human beings—down to the level of digestive activity—a certain type of logic does arise, but it is logic in which the stomach and the interests of the stomach determine logic and conclusions. The basis for the logic of Marxism, for example, arose on this path. And if the stream of logic is brought even lower—into instinctual life—the peculiar type of logic as expressed by Freudian psychology arises.

Logic can, however, descend even further. When this happens, human beings are beginning to use a type of logic that is directed from the subterranean spheres. This may even be an irrefutable logic and may have an enormously convincing effect. This is the logic used by those whom Rudolf Steiner speaks of in his three lectures of November 18, 19, and 25, 1917.⁷ These are the stages of the process which, in his lecture cycle “The Karmic Relationships of the Anthroposophical Movement,” Rudolf Steiner calls “the rape of the cosmic intelligence by Ahriman.” If the cosmic intelligence (the consonance of all the Hierarchies, as Rudolf Steiner defines it) reaches the feet, through which the forces of the subterranean spheres work upward within an individual, then the cosmic intelligence, or “logic,” is stolen by Ahriman. Thus, one no longer thinks independently, but Ahriman is thinking through that person.

The part of the cosmic intelligence that has descended to the “I” being and even lower is the “fallen Sophia,” the Sophia Achamoth of the Gnostics.⁸ The *pure* Sophia remains in the heights of the spirit worlds. During the present era, her work of revelation is

under the protection of the Archangel Michael, who is the “administrator of the cosmic intelligence” in the sense that he guides the whole revelation of the Sophia so that it may be absorbed by the best forces of the human consciousness soul. He creates the bridge between the manas light and the consciousness soul by pouring strength of will into the moral essence of thought revelations. He strengthens the will power of thinking, thus protecting it from intrusion, because it is difficult to introduce an alien content of will into a thought strengthened by Michael. During Old Testament times, the Sophia was equally active. This may be seen not just from the Proverbs of Solomon we have quoted, but also from the deeper fact of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, which represents the goal of Old Testament history.

The birth of the Nathan Jesus was possible only because there was already an awareness of the meaning of his birth. What we may call the “immaculate conception” was a birth brought about not by unconscious forces but by the forces of consciousness. Nevertheless, it was not the head’s consciousness forces, but the *heart’s* conscious forces that were active in the mother of the Nathan Jesus. It was a revelation of the Sophia, present as a heart revelation in the mother of Jesus. That revelation had been in preparation for a long time, because along with the “I” revelation of the prophets there had always existed another current of revelation; this was the current of heart revelation of the mothers and grandmothers of the expected Messiah. The Messiah was not promised only prophetically, but was also discerningly loved and lovingly discerned in the silent depths of the heart. Nor was this a dim discernment; it was a wordless, silent cognition. This does not mean, however, that it was vague or uncertain. Although a great clarity and certainty may exist in the heart’s discernment, there may nevertheless be no organ to express it in words. Such wordless, unspoken discernment lived for many centuries alongside the cognition spoken by the prophets. Indeed, side by side with the written book of the Old Testament we must consider another, unwritten book—one containing the wordless revelation of the heart of Sophia. A radiant comprehension of this invisible book lived in the heart of Mary, whereas an intellectual comprehension of the written book was present in the consciousness of Joseph, who is, for this reason, traditionally represented in art as an old man. The fundamental quality of Joseph’s consciousness is correctly imagined in this way, as a very mature consciousness that embraced the experiences of long ages.

In the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, pressing on to his baptism in the Jordan, we have the consummation and completion of the Old Testament. This figure is the result of the activity of all the forces, currents, and beings described or indicated in these meditations. The activity of Yahweh Elohim, the archangelic being of Jesus, the immaculate sister soul of Adam, the Elijah being, the great Zoroaster and his disciples, the Buddha, and finally the Sophia all resulted in the human Jesus of Nazareth, who was able to absorb into himself the being of the Christ at the baptism in Jordan. This is why the next and last study of the Old Testament (which will summarize the whole work) will be devoted to the figure of Jesus of Nazareth before the moment of the Jordan baptism. That moment of the Jordan baptism is the boundary between the Old Testament history of humankind and the New Testament. Everything that preceded it belongs to the Old Testament

section of the history, and everything that followed belongs to the New Testament era of human history. It is the moment of the living consummation of a great past absorbing the living seed of a great future into itself. The purpose of our next study will be to bring this moment one step nearer to understanding.