

THE FALL

Greetings in the name of the Lord! Blessed are all of you. My dear friends, I talked the last time how evil came into existence. This question has bothered many people who cannot imagine how a God of love could permit the existence of evil. For those friends who are here for the first time tonight, it would be advisable to read the last two lectures in order to understand this lecture, which is a continuation.

Briefly, I have explained how, long before the existence of the material world, a part of the created beings who have been endowed, not only with free will, but also with a certain power, have abused this power. I have explained how this came about in a very slow process. This fall of the angels, as it is called, has happened very slowly -- a slow process of degeneration it might be called, whereby everything divine very slowly and gradually turned into its opposite aspect. And, with this, a separation occurred between those who abused their power and those who did not. I have often said -- and this applies to all beings, spirit or man -- that your attitudes, your opinions, your feelings, your thoughts create the spiritual worlds even though you may still live on earth. Thus you each create the world which will be yours. In the same way, the spirits participating in the fall created new worlds according to their changing attitudes -- dark worlds, worlds that are often referred to as hell. The attitudes of disharmony and hatred created according forms. There is not just one possibility in this respect. Let us suppose for instance that a being in its perfect state had as a particular characteristic a great strength of love, the fire of divine love. This love force would turn around into its opposite and create a fire of hatred and wickedness. Thus a fiery world in a very disharmonious way would come into existence. So you see, all these legends are not as unreal as they might appear to you. Let us suppose another individual, in his perfect state of development, had the particular characteristic of wise calmness, judgment, and detached reflection. These attributes would enable such a being to further the divine creation in a particular way by slow unfoldments of this special creative power. Directed into its opposite force, this would create a world of icy coldness, of icy darkness and desolation. There are many more possibilities how the infinite variety of divine attributes can change into its opposite nature and create the corresponding worlds in the world of darkness, just as there are infinite possibilities in the divine worlds. These spheres of fire or of icy coldness -- in the spiritual sense, of course -- are just two examples. There are the spheres of slime and dirt. There are the spheres of intense suffering through overcrowding, or through isolation, and many, many other varieties.

Since one of the most important divine aspects is free will and liberty of choice, this had to turn into the opposite too! The spirit who was the first to succumb to the temptation of abusing this power, who is sometimes referred to as Lucifer or Satan or the Devil, who influenced and affected others to follow him, would naturally be the first one in this new world that came into existence. And he would have complete power over all those who followed him, and, contrary to God, he would use this power. God gives the freedom of choice, and this has deeper significance

than most of you realize. With that freedom, the possibility to abuse the power given, to use it contrary to divine laws, must perforce exist. If no choice were available, there would be no freedom and no power. There can be no divine happiness, in fact no divinity at all, if it cannot be attained or maintained by free choice. By the same token, the opposite of God and His laws must of course be the prohibiting of such free choice and the domination of the stronger over the weaker ones.

This state of affairs would seem insoluble as far as the salvation of these fallen beings is concerned. For even should they have come to the point of desiring to go back to God, they would not have the power to do so since they were under the dominion and power of the one who reigns in this world of darkness. On the other hand, how could God not break His own laws and still save those beings who long for Him? If He would use His infinite power by overruling the free will and choice of those who decided to use the given power in their own way, He would actually do in principle the same as Lucifer. Here more than in anything else, to maintain the divine principle was of utmost importance. For only by remaining true to himself and His laws would there be a fundamental difference between the ways of God and the ways of Lucifer. Since it is the plan of God that every creature should at one time come back to Him out of free choice and recognition and re-attain divinity, it was imperative that He would not use the same means of force as His opponent even though the purpose might be a good one. It is not the end alone that counts, but very much the means too! Only by remaining true to these principles would the most stubborn of the fallen beings one day see the vast difference of these two ways and the dignity that lies in these divine principles, even though it means a path of suffering for those who wished to get out of these self-created, miserable circumstances. Since life in spirit is in direct relationship to the inner harmony, enlightenment, and general attitude, spirits who had become disharmonious cannot be simply "put" into a world of harmony, as you might travel into a beautiful country. In spirit, the country is you, your product. Therefore, the once fallen spirits had and have to attain a state where they naturally produce again the harmonious worlds. And that this can only be accomplished in the same slow process of development as the fall, with its degeneration, has happened is natural enough. And that this must happen in free choice too, you will now readily understand so that questions like "why has God not done away with evil?" etc., will not come up anymore in your deliberations. On the other hand, means had to be found so that those creatures who desired to return to God and to keep His laws instead of the luciferic ones could do so within the framework of the laws of God whereby the free will of no one would be broken, not even of Lucifer himself. And this is the great plan of salvation in which Christ played a major role. About this I will talk in more detail next time.

So first, these spheres of darkness first came into existence where the spirits lived under the dominion of Lucifer. At first, there was no longing, no sense of the light they had once possessed. Only after a considerable testing of the self-chosen "medicine" with all its desolation, a vague longing for something else, they did not quite know what, took hold of some of these beings. Of course it goes without saying that the memory of God and His worlds was extinguished in the measure that disharmony had set in but revived again as the attitude changed, but the latter could only occur in an exceedingly slow process. Spiritual darkness annuls knowledge, as spiritual light is knowledge. Just as with human beings, if you have no spiritual enlightenment, you have to work spiritually in order to regain certain glimpses of this light. The vague longing that at first some and later more creatures felt was sufficient to bring a glimmer of light into their world, as though a far away dawn changed the contours of their world a little bit. The cold would not be quite so cold anymore; the fire not so hot anymore; the filth not quite so filthy anymore; and the loneliness not quite so unbearable and hopeless anymore.

When enough spirits came into this state of longing and this longing increased, the time was ripe for the material world to come into existence. You may say that God created this material world -- and this is true -- for nothing can be created without the creative divine force. But it is equally true to say that the material world was created by this further longing for something higher. This world you are now living in is the product of this desire to strive higher, where certain conditions exist in which development can proceed and in which a free choice for God can be made which is impossible in the worlds of darkness. In other words, this earth sphere is a product of the longing of the fallen spirits. But it is equally a product of the longing of all those beings who remained with God, whose deepest desire it always was and is to bring their brothers and sisters back to God. Therefore both the divine worlds and the worlds of darkness helped in the creation of this earth sphere; and thus the influence of both worlds exists and will manifest according to the individual attitude of a being, which again has on this plane the power of free choice. Conditions and circumstances on this earth sphere are different, of course, due to this new form of matter; but, then, circumstances vary in all spheres.

Long before these fallen spirits were far enough to be born as men and women, the spiritual life force first acted and created other forms of life -- not only animals, plants, minerals, but the original life force that works and manifests itself in each created being -- created, so to speak, other substances, substances of course that were at first without self-knowledge just as a plant or mineral is without self-knowledge. But as time went on and on, and more and more beings came into this state of longing for light -- this would perhaps constitute the only feeling these beings had at that time -- gradually, very gradually man in material form came into existence through various intermediate states. When this happened, a major phase was accomplished. For this was the time when the first glimmer of self-knowledge was born, or reborn, or became awake again. And more and more people came to live on earth.

Only with this self-knowledge, which includes thinking and deciding, can development take place. In other words, self-knowledge is a necessary condition. All the forms of life previous to man only led up to this point.

You all know now that man produces his spiritual world. And on earth, where also the influence of God's world existed, he now had for the first time since after the fall the possibility to learn, to change, to turn to God, and thus create a better world for himself, in matter and in spirit. Into this world he would go after his material death and also when his body rested during sleep. From this world he would receive inspirations and influences of all sorts. This is why development cannot proceed faster, for all the incarnated beings were at first so low in their development that they were constantly influenced by their own sphere. If God's world would not have acted on this earth too, there would not have been any difference between the earth sphere and a sphere in the world of darkness, for only the influence of the latter would occur in either case.

You must all realize, my friends, that I can only give you a very, very rough outline of all this. This touches the very greatest questions which cannot be fully understood by any human being, for human language is too limited in the first place, and human understanding is also too limited. Therefore, as a rule, I do not even like to talk much about all this because the main thing for you is to learn to know your own souls and thus to develop spiritually. However, man often wonders about these fundamental questions, not merely in a spirit of superficial curiosity, but in good faith,

and ignorance and wrong conceptions on some of these points may seriously hinder his development. This is why I am charged to give this series of lectures even though some of you may not yet have sufficient inner perception to sense and feel the truth and deep significance all this has, not only generally, but also very particularly on your own lives.

How did the influence of the world of God manifest itself? Could angels of God guide and inspire these human beings incarnated from the spheres of darkness, and thus be in connection with them? This would be an impossibility since it is according to universal law that man himself has to make the first step in order to receive help from the world of God. How could he make this step if his whole being was still so coarse that he had no inkling of God, no idea of His world, no notion of what to do? On the other hand, God's world cocreated this material earth and thus, according to the law of free will, had the right to have its influence manifest on earth. The answer is that pure spirits, who remained in the divine worlds, were incarnated at all times. To be sure, very few, but the influence of one such being outweighs by far the strength and influence of a hundred creatures of the world of darkness. These spirits, incarnated from the world of God, brought with them the light, the love, and the wisdom. They fulfilled a great mission with their incarnation on earth, and their influence was much more far-reaching than might appear at first sight. With this influence growing steadily through the ages, the fallen spirits could, during their incarnation on earth, freely choose which side to listen to: the one reaching their lower nature or the one that seemed to push them ever upwards, difficult as this path may be. By this free choice, God's law concerning this aspect was not violated.

The communication with the beyond did not only take place through guidance and inspiration, but there always existed -- and always will exist -- a more direct form of communication, namely, that what you now call "mediumship" in various forms: with what spheres of the beyond depends entirely on the attitude, goal, and general development of the people in question -- not only the medium but also the people using this channel. Needless to say, human beings who were fallen spirits could not have any other communication at these early times but with the world of darkness. But the pure incarnated spirits had communication of course with the world of God, and this outweighed so strongly the danger and damage of a communication with the luciferic worlds that it was indeed "worthwhile," so to speak. If communication with one world could exist, a connection with the other was within the law. If one would have been impossible, the other would have to be equally impossible. This is, incidentally, where human beings make a great mistake in their reasoning. They claim that any communication with the beyond is luciferic and dangerous, indeed, that only this is possible. Development could not have proceeded at all at these early times if the pure spirits who were at times incarnated could not have made a very direct connection with the world of God from which truth could come to man. But in order to have this benefit and remain within the framework of the divine law, as explained at the beginning of this lecture, an equality had to exist so that the free choice of each individual could be made. An equal influence had to come from both sides. An equal influence means that fewer beings of the divine world lived on earth because their strength always outweighs and outlasts the influence of evil. However, especially at these early times, there existed a great interchange between the material and the luciferic worlds. These dark spirits claimed to be gods and favor mankind with all sorts of grants if man, in turn, would do what they dictated. With all the harm and danger, as I said, the few communications with the world of God made up for this damage a hundred times. The incarnated pure spirits had, on one hand, the enlightenment in themselves to spread divine truth and, on the other, the necessary requirements to be in communication with the world of God as instruments. For, without this

latter, not enough could be given mankind because even though these pure beings had no evil in them, the material shell takes too much away for sufficient teachings to have been made out of their own selves. Thus truth was spread in the manner that humanity at each particular period was ready to absorb.

This went on for a long time. So gradually, more of the once fallen spirits came to the state in which they could recognize God. Thus their longing became conscious and significant in its meaning. Thus the will could be developed to overcome the evil impulses, the lower nature. This change that began to take place had, again, a much greater effect as can be realized offhand. None of you fully understands that if a single person develops, really does the very best in his power, he does not only help himself, but he adds the most valuable cosmic power to a great reservoir which will ultimately have a very decisive effect and will spread considerably even though he himself may not even see a part of this effect. He may see some of it in his immediate surroundings: how all of a sudden his fellow creatures begin to change a little bit due to his own change. But he will not know, as long as he is on earth, how far-reaching the effect of his smallest endeavor in this direction is. No such endeavor is therefore ever in vain, my friends! It is as though you throw a stone into a pond of quiet water. There come rings and rings, and they go so far that your eyes cannot see the rings of the outer periphery, but they are still there. If one person overcomes a single weakness, this constitutes the best help in this great plan of salvation.

The next time, I will continue from here and talk in greater detail about the part Jesus Christ played in the salvation plan.

And now I am ready for your questions, my friends, to some of which I would like to devote more time in my answers.

QUESTION: May I ask the following question: the dissection of Einstein's brain showed no marked differences anatomically to other human beings. What is, in a metaphysical sense, the vehicle in a physiopsychological way for intelligence and intellect?

ANSWER: This experiment is the very best example that intelligence is not in the physical body. The ability to think, to create, and so on has nothing to do with the physical organs unless, of course, the physical organ is damaged, which would again only affect the corresponding subtle body. I think most of you know that all thinking is in the subtle body, in one of the subtle bodies, just as all feeling is in another subtle body. These subtle bodies, as development proceeds, will integrate and become at the end just one, let us call it the spiritual body, where all purified and perfect thinking and feeling has integrated into this last, ultimate, and eternal subtle body. No matter how many layers there still are, besides the physical layer, they will eventually all disintegrate and culminate in the spiritual body in a purified form. Until this is accomplished, there is this division, each function belonging to a special layer or subtle body. The physical layer has as its sole function the physical life in its various aspects. But thinking or feeling belongs to a different realm and therefore takes place in a different layer or body.

QUESTION: Is the thinking in the mental body?

ANSWER: Yes, in the mental body.

QUESTION: Could I hear a few words about bodhisattvas in relationship to Jesus Christ -- if there is any relation?

ANSWER: There is no relation there in a direct way. This word you use -- we have different terms -- designates a special type of being in the divine world. All created beings had, originally, a particular divine aspect specially developed, and the purpose of the creation was that each being complemented the creation by furthering other aspects through development so that perfection would be reached not only in one aspect, but in all. This is the way this power of creation could have been used by all beings, but was only used by those who did not abuse this power. Therefore, absolute perfection only exists in God and in Christ, Who has most of the divine substance. The perfection of all other beings is a relative one, but could become perfect by being cocreators. These so-called bodhisattvas are beings who are endowed with certain particular aspects of divinity, each representing a different one. This one aspect is their particular force with which they help in this great plan of salvation in very special ways and by various and special means. But until this plan has reached its conclusion, the pure beings use their efforts in helping with their particular strength, and only afterwards will the plan of creation come to its full conclusion by each being perfecting himself in all ways. Presently there is only Christ, except God, of course, who is perfect in all ways, who has all talents completely developed. All other beings have their characteristics in which they were created, God leaving it up to them, all of us, to continue His creation ourselves by developing all other characteristics, aspects, talents, etc., in a perfect way. So it is not quite true to say that all created beings were once completely perfect, as the Absolute is. We were perfect in our own ways which of course is always relative. You can be perfect within the frame of your present development, for instance, but that does not mean that you are absolutely perfect. Someone of much lower development than anyone of you here can be relatively more perfect than some of you of whom more can be expected. So perfection remains relative as long as the plan of creation is not fulfilled, except with God and Christ. And this should answer your question, for those beings you have mentioned are perfect only in some ways, while Christ is perfect in all ways.

QUESTION: Last time, you answered the question about will power and self-control. But I think it is important to see oneself in one's true reality. So, it would be necessary to get this self-realization in order to improve oneself. How can one attain this self-knowledge?

ANSWER: This is a very good and a very important question indeed. Of course I speak a great deal about this subject to my friends with whom I work privately, and I have also in the past treated this subject occasionally in general lectures, but this is so basic and important that not enough stress can be put on it, and it is well worth the time to speak about this again and again in intervals. As you rightly say, before will power and self-control can be strengthened, you have to have a certain amount of self-knowledge in order to have a clear-cut idea why you want to develop these attributes, what is your goal, and in what direction should this will power and self-control be utilized. On one hand, in order to have will power, the reason has to be clear in your mind; on the other hand, to find out your true goals and wishes, and most important of all, in order to gain self-knowledge, you definitely need to already have some will power to begin with. Thus it works both ways. But in any case, the first step in the proper order would be to establish what the issues are: why it is necessary to have self-knowledge, what are its advantages, how costly is it to attain, what are the disadvantages of not having it? Once you clearly understand this, you can make the proper decision. And this clear understanding you must gain if you really set out to think about it objectively, disregarding the resistances of your lower nature. All you have to do is not shirk the

issue and think things through to the end of the road. This is not so difficult, it merely requires a little bit of courage and wisdom. Everybody has some of this courage and wisdom within; it is only a question of letting it come to the surface. So, as with will power, here too, it is first a question of the proper decision, of making up one's mind once and for all. And this can only be done when all sides are considered. The trouble with people is not that they cannot do this but that they avoid those decisions concerning the inner life. They run away from them, somehow sensing it might be uncomfortable; therefore they prefer to cover the issue up instead of viewing it with clear eyes and an open, unbiased mind, not pampering the lazy self that so much likes to wallow in the swamp of self-indulgence. So the why of the trouble and discomfort of self-knowledge has to be established. And this is not so difficult to answer, at least not for a person who knows there is God even if many of the facets of Him and His creation are still ignored. If there is only a feeble belief and this thought or realization is followed to the end, the understanding must follow that it is necessary to develop yourself. And this self-development cannot be done without self-knowledge. This self-knowledge is the only thing that really counts, the only thing, my friends! Nothing else is any good, nothing else will ever bring your development about, enable you to have real faith and real love for God above everything and for your fellow creatures as for yourself. You have to begin with yourself before you can attain all this, attain the freedom and harmony you all long for in your innermost beings. No matter what path you choose, if this complete self-knowledge is not contained in it or if it is not the major requirement in it, you will accomplish nothing! No matter how much you learn and read and do this or do that, all this counts for nothing unless you use the knowledge you do acquire to follow this path of self-knowledge.

Now how do you accomplish this? Of course, it is not easy. But its rewards are the richest, for this path is the only one that will bring you liberation. Thus it is only logical that it cannot be easy. It means, in the first place, to be able to humiliate yourself. Yes, my friends, no one likes to hear that. For the self-will and the ego and the vanity exist in every human being and are the strongest hindrance to perfection, faith, harmony, and love. Whatever the various individual faults can possibly be, this applies to each and everyone who goes through the cycle of incarnations, in other words, who is not a pure spirit. So if you want to gain self-knowledge, you have to reconcile yourself first to the idea "I have to do that which is most difficult for me!" For there lies the key. If it is most difficult for you to show yourself with a weakness, then it is just that which your soul needs to struggle free of its chains. Or if it is difficult for you to give up your vanity in any other way, or your selfishness, then it is just this in which you should jump in -- freely because you chose it so, not because life forces you to do anyway. You see, my friends, the divine laws are made in such a way that the things you need come to you anyway. But it will be so much easier if you meet them halfway. If you decide out of your own accord "I want it because I obviously need it" and then step into it yourself; if life forces or pushes you into it sort of against your will, it will not only be so much harder, but it will come to you again and again until you have learned through self-knowledge that you need what life gives you and that you meet it freely yourself. Then the lesson will be learned, and life will have other things to offer you. The more purified you are by this process, the less you will need such unpleasant things; or rather, what will first have seemed unpleasant, will not be so anymore. So you cannot avoid what you need, that I can assure you. But until you have met it out of your own accord with the realization and understanding of its necessity for your own character, it will not cease. Please remember that, all of you.

In order to gain self-knowledge, you might, for instance, sit down and think "what is most difficult for me to do in daily life?" Perhaps with some, the most difficult will be to say the truth, for

whatever motive. For another, it might be humiliation in some way, to show yourself as you are without all this mask and without all this superiority you try to impress other people with. For another person, it may be the most difficult to be modest, to remain in the background; for another, it may be difficult to give something, with one perhaps materially and with another spiritually. So everyone has different difficulties. And each one can find out about these comparatively very easily if you really try. You do not have to think so far; think immediately of your present life now. From that point of view, view every day that passes, and you will, after some trying and some training, of course, come to the point when you recognize and view your reactions quite differently, I assure you. You will learn to recognize your own emotional reactions to certain things that happen in your life that you have been completely unaware of so far. You are in the habit of seeing only your immediate outer problems, not realizing that they are only the effect of some cause which is not at all deeply hidden from you, but which you could so easily recognize if you only make the decision once to do what I say here and stick to it. Then all the connections will be so clear in front of your eyes that you will be deeply shocked how you could not have seen all this in the past. This connection between your troubles and other things you have put aside, subconsciously but still deliberately, will have a very blissful effect on you. It will make you happy the way only truth can do. It will liberate latent powers and healing forces for your body and soul. If you experience this regularly, then you can be quite sure you are on the proper path. But the temptation is always so great to put all this aside, and therefore you should guard yourself beforehand against this temptation and battle it every time anew. After having done this efficiently for a time, even this temptation will cease. Once it has become second nature to you, it will require no more effort. But at the beginning, it will require considerable effort and constant guarding against your own lower self, in order not to stifle your spirit who wants this so badly but who may be the loser if your outer self allows all the "excuses" your lower nature furnishes. Of course, I speak very generally now, not personally just for one, but this regards everybody.

Make a list of your faults. And if you can think of only two or three, then you have proof that you do not know yourself. Then you can avail yourself of the opportunity of self-purification and self-knowledge by doing what seems at first so difficult. Ask the people around you to tell you what your faults are. This will give you knowledge about yourself, and this will teach you the humility you need. For as long as it is difficult for you, it is a telling sign that you need just that very badly. If it is easy for you, if you do not feel resentment, resistance, or any kind of heaviness within, then it is not important anymore. But it does not matter what you try to tell others, it matters how you feel when someone tells you your shortcomings. If you observe clinically what you feel when that happens, if you do not want to fool yourself about it, you will know where you stand spiritually, because this is the only way you can really be detached, my friends. When your own shortcomings in the eyes of others do not matter anymore, when your humiliation does not matter anymore, then you are detached! -- not when you avoid the things that bother you. And this is difficult, at least at the beginning, and perhaps not everyone is ready for it. Some may need more time, more knowledge, more dabbling at the fringes before they can really go on the path, but whoever does it will indeed become free. And God will help you to all further stages of self-realization if these initial steps are taken. So my advice is this: think, first, what seems most difficult to you in relation to other people. After you have found this out, consider with what trend in you this might be connected. And then decide whether you are really ready to overcome your chains in this way, not only for the sake of your own freedom; but for the sake of God; for the sake of your own spirit; your own higher self; for the sake of your development; for the love you could only then give and receive; for your complete fulfillment. Are you ready to do that? How many of my friends here are? And then you

will need your will power, my dear ones, if you have decided with a big and wholehearted yes. You will need will power and self-discipline in order to battle all your faults, which can never happen by pushing them into the subconscious, by merely covering them up so that they do not show on the surface. For do not believe that something you are unaware of does not exist. The process of eliminating your faults, which is the next step after self-knowledge is a very different one. Briefly speaking, the process is to watch yourself first as you really are, without vanity, without wanting to be better or more than you are at this point. Simply take stock of yourself and get, for the time being, accustomed to see yourself where you really are and not where you want to be. Accept this temporary reality for two reasons: (1) you have to be unemotional and undisturbed about what you are before you can change yourself; and this needs the new habit of seeing yourself clearly for a while without any false motives and excuses and blindness; (2) this will also teach you the necessary humiliation that is a major requirement of spiritual development and true detachment. This acceptance does not mean that you should remain that way. The goal must be to ultimately change these trends, but this cannot be done before you have learned this stage entirely. Thus observe yourself daily when and how your faults manifest, not only outside, but in your feelings. Observe your reactions. By this reaction, you will learn to judge how far you have come in accepting yourself without embellishment. When this is mastered, then the next stage will begin by meditating on what the opposite of this particular fault really is, how you might react and feel if you had already acquired this. If you do this with the help of God, asking for inspiration, for help and strength, you will, after doing this faithfully for some time, begin to feel differently, to have new inner reactions that will leave you so free, so wonderful! You may also meditate how each of your particular faults is a direct hindrance of the unfoldment of love. For each fault is just that. It blurs the love force in the soul. If you proceed in this way, God will inspire you and guide you, you can be quite sure of that. But, as I said, it is a difficult path. But blessed are those who take it; who have the courage and the wisdom to do so.

I know, my friends, I have given you strong medicine. No one likes to hear these things. It would be so much more pleasant to hear things that are easy or that are impersonal. But, unfortunately, that would not correspond to truth. And since I am a spirit of truth, of the world of God, I have to give you truth, whether it is comfortable or not. But yet, as bitter medicine as this may be, I think if you open your hearts, you will feel the love I have for each one of you. And love cannot come from any other side but the side of God's world. And never should you have gratefulness for anyone else but God, whether it is me or another spirit of the world of God! No matter how much you may be helped, no created being is anything without God. And the higher a creature is developed, the less it will want honor and admiration, which is only due to the Creator, without whom we are nothing -- we spirits just as much as you humans. And when you are doing something, when you are accomplishing something, whatever it may be, realize that it is only through the grace of God that you can do it -- not through yourself! Through yourself you are nothing. And the highest created being in existence, Christ Himself, has said so time and again.

QUESTION: I understand that when we are incarnated in this world, we have certain limitations with regard to our spiritual development. Is it possible for each one of us to burst this, to go farther than the limitations which are set to us?

ANSWER: Oh yes. I will say this, however. Certainly you cannot accomplish everything in one incarnation. That would be impossible. But you can certainly break these limitations. That happens quite often. It can only happen by what I have said in the question I answered before

about this path, this noblest of all paths. If a person really has the will, and if this will is also put into practice, then the limitations will recede, and so much more can be accomplished in this one life. To give you an example, what you can accomplish in one incarnation by taking this path, would perhaps need twenty if you do not. That is the difference. And that will give you an idea how much it is within your power to break the limitations.

QUESTION: But not everyone is led to this path. There are millions of people who...

ANSWER: In the first place, this is not the only possibility to take this path, my dear. That is not so at all. Certainly, the help that a direct communication with the spirit world of God can give is a very valuable one. But everyone who only has the slightest possibility to take the path will be led somehow, somewhere to the right place and manner so that he can take the path, either to a person or a spirit so that he may receive the necessary material to work with. It may be through a church or through a particular teacher or through a spirit or through a very strong direct communication by way of inspiration. The spirits recognize where the possibility exists; they recognize where the desire may be there or may be aroused. And they will guide accordingly. Everybody will get just what they need, that you can be sure. The problem has never arisen that someone who is ready for the path may not have the opportunity to do so. This does not exist, my friends. The laws of the divine world work too accurately for that. The problem is much rather that a great percentage of people who could take this path and who are led to some outlets, let us say, where they could do it, finally do not. Often the world of God tries it again and again with different possibilities but never is the essence understood, because it does not want to be understood. Just look at your own circle; and it is similar everywhere -- many more come than who actually do it. It can be safely believed that this does not happen at the cost of others who may not have such possibilities. There are very good reasons for everything. Whether it is here or elsewhere, a handful out of hundreds will really and truly take this path. Every great person or teacher or priest or communication with the world of God will tell you the same. Many more people are guided to them, and only a small, small part will really fulfill the reason of their guidance. The great majority of mankind, however, is not ready yet to take this difficult path of perfection. If they learn just a little bit in this life to become a better person, to accept that perhaps God does exist after all, this might prepare them for the path in their next incarnation. So you see, the spirit world actually gives more people the possibility, just on the remotest chance, than there are people who take this possibility. Those who are not guided anywhere, you can be sure that they either have no desire, no real understanding, and not the remotest possibility in this life to change in this respect, or else they are people who have already found what they need and what is best for them in this incarnation.

QUESTION: Could you please make clear the difference between the soul and the spirit?

ANSWER: The spirit is the ultimate being, the indestructible being that lives eternally, as I have said already in this lecture. The soul is one of the subtle bodies that will eventually disintegrate. Is that clear, do you understand that? I think what you want to know is how the two manifest with man so that he may know which is which. Is that what you mean? To have the spirit consciously manifest is, of course, not easy. This can only happen when spiritual development has reached a certain point, when a breakthrough has been accomplished in man's higher self. Then, and only then, you will feel that something thinks within you, directs you, sends you messages, gives you deep and unquestionable knowledge. And all this does not come from your brain region where your normal thinking takes place, but it comes from the region of your solar plexus. The manifestation of

your soul, however, you can determine by your emotional life, by your feelings, and by your subconscious. Even for this, a great deal of self-knowledge is necessary because most people are unaware of the majority of their real feelings and emotional reactions and are thus slave to them. They are mastered by them instead of controlling and mastering them. In order to achieve the latter, self-observation, objectivity, and self-criticism are essential. If my advice in tonight's second reply is followed, the result must be, first, awareness of the soul, then, awareness of the spirit.

I will answer the rest of the questions next time, my friends, for our time is up. I beg all of you, especially those who have come here for the first time, when you leave tonight, do not be too hasty in your conclusions. This is such a vast subject, this is new to you in many respects, even to some of my more regular friends, and it may take a little time to adjust to new outlooks. Do not bar your vision by too hasty conclusions, think seriously and carefully, and do not let your subconscious emotions play you a trick by blurring your judgment. Be careful of that, for you may do great harm to yourselves.

God's blessings go to everyone of you. Make this blessing aware so that it may help you in your decisions, that it may strengthen you to recognize the will of God and act accordingly. Be in peace, be in God!

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