

# Ancient Cultural Impulses Spiritualized in Goethe

## The Cosmic Knowledge of the Knights Templar

*Dornach, September 25, 1916\**

WE HAVE BEEN OCCUPIED in showing how those spiritual forces that we call the luciferic and ahrimanic powers play their part in the historical growth of mankind. We have seen how what is to be carried over from one age into another in the course of world evolution is carried over through such powers, and we have been at pains to show how in the desires, instincts and strivings for knowledge, in the impulses, too, of man's social life, something is present that can only be grasped concretely when one recognizes those supersensible forces that underlie world historical evolution. We have seen how what must come to expression in our fifth post-Atlantean epoch has been in preparation since the fifteenth century. We have seen what new faculties of mankind have evolved in the whole European cultural life since that time.

If we wish to find a spirit who has brought to expression in the most concentrated and clearest manner what the impulses of our time ought to be, then we can look to Goethe. We have already observed that equally in his conception of nature and in his imaginative world,

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\* This is lecture six contained in *The Mexican Mysteries and the Inner Impulses of Evolution*, GA 171.

Goethe has expressed something that can form the beginning of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch. I must remind you today how I have often pointed out that Goethe has expressed in intimate fashion in his fairytale "The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily" what he regarded as the right impulses of culture, knowledge, feeling and will; that is, what he was obliged to look upon as necessary for the activity of man in the future. He has concealed in his fairy tale what he knew of the spiritually hidden active forces at work in mankind since the fifteenth century, and that will be at work for about two thousand years more. You know, too, how in our Mystery Dramas we have sought to bring to life in all possible detail what Goethe saw when he composed this fairytale "The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily". The intention was to bring to expression, in the way in which it can again be brought to expression today, a hundred years later, what inspired Goethe and is to inspire the entire fifth post-Atlantean culture as the highest spiritual treasure. Such depths of soul underlying so great and powerful a work as the fairytale "The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily", in spite of its being symbolic, and such great impulses underlying Goethe's *Faust* as a poem of mankind, point again and again to forces lying deep below the surface of consciousness. All this worked in such a soul out of the depths of old cultural impulses. Today I should like to speak a little about such cultural impulses in connection with yesterday's lecture, and of how they went through a kind of spiritualizing process in Goethe.

We must go back to that age in which the impulses for the fifth post-Atlantean epoch were first laid down in germ, back before the fifteenth century because things that are to develop spiritually must be prepared long

beforehand. One can only recognize how in the European life of soul, as well as in the European social life, in the striving toward the True, the Beautiful and the Good, the normally progressive divine-spiritual forces intermingle in our age with luciferic-ahrimanic powers when one goes back into the time when the earliest impulses were given. We learned about these first impulses of earlier ages yesterday. Today, we will learn about a similar impetus from the middle of medieval times, and come to know how certain spiritual tendencies were born out of human evolution. In doing so, we will no more than indicate the historical background since nowadays one can read about it in any encyclopedia.

In order to describe the configuration of the cultural impulses that underwent a certain spiritualization in Goethe, I must refer to the age in which the impulse of the Crusades arose out of the European will: in fact, out of the Christian impulses of the European will. At the time when the will to visit the Holy Places originated in the civilized inhabitants of Europe there were bitter conflicts in the life there between what are called the luciferic and ahrimanic powers. That is to say, into the progressive, good, truly Christian impulses those other powers worked in, as it were, from the direction that was described yesterday. They worked in the way in which they are permitted by the wise guidance of the world. Thus, what happens in the wise guidance of the world may be duly influenced by other impulses working from the past and interpenetrating the impulses of the present in the way we have described.

When we consider it, among much that brings rejoicing to the soul, among much that originated soon after the Crusaders won their first successes, we see the founding

of the Order of the Knights Templar in the year 1119 A.D. Five French knights united under the leadership of Hugo de Payens and, at the holy place where the Mystery of Golgotha occurred, they founded an order dedicated entirely to the Mystery of Golgotha. Its first important home was close to the place where Solomon's Temple once stood, so that the holy wisdom from most ancient times and the wisdom of Solomon could work together for Christianity in this spot with all the feelings and sentiments that have arisen from entire and holy devotion toward the Mystery of Golgotha and its Bearer. In addition to the religious vows of duty to their spiritual superiors usual at that time, the first Knights Templar pledged themselves to work together in the most intensive manner to bring under European control the place where the events of the Mystery of Golgotha had occurred.

The Written and unwritten rules of the Order were such that the Knights were to think of nothing except how they could completely fill themselves in heart and soul with the sacred Mystery of Golgotha, and how with every drop of their blood they could help bring the holy places within the sphere of influence of European authority. In each moment of their lives they were to think and feel dedicated with all their strength to this task alone, shunning nothing in order to realize it. Their blood was no longer to be their own but was to be devoted solely to the task we have indicated. Were they to meet a power three times as great as themselves, it was commanded that they were not to flee but were to stand firm. In each moment of their lives they were to think that the blood coursing in their veins did not belong to them but to their great spiritual mission. Whatever wealth they might acquire belonged to no one individual but to the Order

alone. Should a member of the Order be killed, no booty should be available to the enemy except the hempen cord girding his loins. This cord was the sign of their work, which was freely undertaken for what was then regarded as the healing of the European spirit. A great and mighty task was set, less to thought than to deep feeling, which aimed at strengthening the soul life as individual and personal with the intention that it might be entirely absorbed in the progressive stream of Christian evolution.

This was the star, as it were, that was to shine before the Knights Templar in all that they thought, felt and understood. With this an impulse was given, which in its broader activity—on the wider extension of the Templar Order from Jerusalem over the countries of Europe—should have led to a certain penetration of European life by a Christian spirit. With respect to the immeasurable zeal that existed in the souls of these Knights, the powers who have to hold evolution back, leading the souls to become estranged from the earth and to led away from it to a special planet, leaving the earth uninhabited, those powers who desired this, set to work quite especially on souls who felt and thought as did the Knights Templar. They desired to devote themselves entirely to the spirit and could easily be attacked by those forces that wished to carry away the spiritual from the earth. These forces do not want the spiritual to be spread over the earth to permeate earth existence. Indeed, the danger is always at hand that souls may become estranged from the earth, become earth weary, and that earthly humanity may become mechanized.

There we have a powerfully aspiring spiritual life that we can assume will easily be approached by the luciferic

temptation; a foothold is here given it. Then we also have, however, at the same time as the spread of the Templar Order over the various countries of Europe, the possibility of a sharp intrusion of ahrimanic powers in Western Europe. At the close of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the Templar Order—not the individual Knights but the Order—had attained great prestige and wealth through its activity and had spread over Western Europe, we have a human personality ruling the West who can actually be said to have experienced in his soul a kind of inspiration through the moral, or the immoral, power of gold. He was a man who could definitely use for his inspiration the wisdom materialized from gold. Recollect the fairytale “The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily” in which the Golden King became the representative of wisdom. Since spiritual forces also exist in the various substances, which are always only maya with spiritual forces standing behind that the materialist cannot perceive, it is absolutely possible for gold to become an inspirer.

A highly gifted personality, Philip the Fair, who was equipped with an extraordinary degree of cunning and the most evil ahrimanic wisdom, had access to this inspiration through gold. Philip IV, who reigned in France from 1285 to 1314 can really be said to have had a genius for avarice. He felt the instinctive urge to recognize nothing else in the world but what can be paid for with gold, and he was willing to concede power over gold to none but himself. He wished to bring forcibly under his control all the power that can be exercised through gold. This grew in him to be the immense passion that has become famous in history. When Pope Boniface forbade the French clergy to pay taxes to the State, this fact, in itself

not very important, led Philip to make a law forbidding anyone to take gold and silver out of France. All of it was to remain there, such was his will, and only he was to have control of it. One might say that this was his idiosyncrasy. He sought to keep gold and silver for himself and gave a debased currency to his subjects and others. Uproar and resentment among the people could not prevent him from carrying out this policy, so that, when he made a last attempt to mix a little gold and silver as possible in the coinage, he had to flee, on the occasion of a popular riot, to the Temple of the Knights Templar. Driven to do so by his own severe regulations, he had had his treasures deposited for safety with them. He was astounded to see how quickly the Knights calmed the popular uprising. At the same time, he was filled with fear because he had seen how great was the moral power of the knights over the people, and how little he, who was only inspired by gold, availed against them. The Knights, too, had by this time acquired rich treasure and were immensely wealthy, but according to their rules, they were obliged to place all the riches of the Order in the service of spiritual activity and creative work.

When a passion is so strong as avarice was in Philip the Fair, it presses out strong forces from the soul that have a great influence on the unfolding of the will toward other men. To the nation, Philip counted for little, but he meant much to those who were his vassals, and these constituted a great host. He also understood how to use his power. As Pope Boniface had once opposed his will to make the clergy in France pay as much as possible, Philip hatched a plot against him. Boniface was freed by his followers but he died of grief soon after. This was at the time when Philip undertook to bring the entire Church

completely under his control, thereby making Church officials mere bondsmen of the kingly power in which gold ruled. He thereupon caused the removal of the Pope to Avignon, which marked the beginning of what is often known in history as the "Babylonian Captivity" of the papacy. This lasted from the year 1309 to 1377.

Pope Clement V, former Bishop of Bordeaux, resided in Avignon and was a tool completely in the hands of Philip. Gradually, under the working of Philip's powerful will, he had reached the point of having no longer a will of his own, but used his ecclesiastical power only to serve Philip, carrying out all he desired. Philip was filled with a passionate desire to make himself master of all the then available wealth. After he had seen what a different significance gold could have in other hands, it was no wonder that he wished above all things to exterminate those other hands, the Knights Templar, so that he might confiscate their gold and possess their treasure himself. Now, I said that such a passion, aroused in such a materialistic way and working so intensely, creates powerful forces in the soul. At the same time, it creates knowledge, although of an ahrimanic order. So it was possible for a certain second-hand sort of knowledge to arise in the soul of Philip of those methods that we have seen flame up in the harshest, most horrible way in the Mexican mysteries. The knowledge arose in Philip of what can be brought about by taking life in the correct way, although in a different, more indirect way from that of the Mexican initiates. As if out of deep subconscious impulses, he found the means of incorporating such impulses into humanity's evolution by putting men to death. For this, he needed victims. In a quite remarkable way this devilish instinct of Philip's harmonized with what developed of

necessity in the bosom of the Knights, resulting from the dedication of their lives to the things I have indicated.

Naturally, where something great and noble arises, as it did among the Knights Templar, much that does not belong—perhaps even immorality—becomes attached to that greatness and nobleness. There were, of course, Knights who could be reproached for all sorts of things; that shall not be denied. But there was nothing of this kind in the spirit of the foundation of the Order, for what the knights had accomplished for Jerusalem stood first, and then what could be accomplished for the Christianizing of the whole of European culture. Gradually the Knights spread out in highly influential societies over England, France, Spain, part of Italy and Central Europe. They spread everywhere. In each single Knight was developed to the highest degree this complete penetration of the soul with the feeling and experience of the Mystery of Golgotha and of all that is connected with the Christian impulse. The force of this union with the Christ was strong and intensive. He was a true Knight Templar who no longer knew anything of himself but when he felt, he let the Christ feel in him; when he thought, he let the Christ think in him; when he was filled with enthusiasm, he let the Christ in him be enthusiastic. They were perhaps few in whom this ideal had worked a complete transformation, a metamorphosis of the soul life, and who had really often brought the soul out of the body and enabled it to live in the spiritual world, but in respect of the entire Order they were, for all that, a considerable number. Something quite remarkable and powerful had thus entered into the circle of the Templar Order without their having known the rules of the Christian initiation other than through sacrificial service. At first in the

Crusades, then in the spiritual work in Europe, their souls were so inspired by intense devotion to the Christian impulse and the Mystery of Golgotha that consequently many Knights experienced a Christian initiation. We have before us the following world historical event: on the world historical basis of the experience of a number of men, the Christian initiation, which is to say the perception of those spiritual worlds that are accessible to men through Christian initiation, arises from the fundamental depths of human development.

Such events always call forth opposing forces, which, indeed, in those times were abundantly at hand. What thus enters the world is not only loved; it is also excessively hated. In Philip, however, there was less hatred than the desire to rid the world of such a Society and to filch from it the treasure that had flowed abundantly to it and that was used only in the service of the spirit.

Now in such an initiation as was experienced by a number of the Knights, there is always the possibility of perceiving not only the beneficent, the divine, but also the luciferic and ahrimanic forces. All that draws men down into the ahrimanic world and up into the luciferic appears, to him who goes through such an initiation, side by side with the insight into the normal worlds. The one thus initiated is confronted with all the sufferings, temptations and trials that come upon man through the powers hostile to good. He has moments in which the good spiritual world disappears before his spiritual gaze, the gaze of his soul, and he sees himself as though imprisoned by what tries to gain power over him. He sees himself in the hands of the ahrimanic and luciferic forces that wish to seize him to gain control of his willing, feeling, thinking and sense perception. These, indeed, are

spiritual trials that are well known from the descriptions of those who have seen into the spiritual world.

There were many in the circle of the Knights Templar who could gain a deep insight into the Mystery of Golgotha and its meaning and into Christian symbolism as it had taken shape through the development of the Last Supper. They beheld as well the deep background of this symbolism. Many a one who in consequence of his Christian initiation could look into the Christian impulses passing through the historical evolution of the European peoples, also saw something else; he experienced it in his own soul, as it were, since it always again came over him as a temptation. Recognizing the unconscious capabilities of the human soul, he repeatedly overcame the temptation that showed itself to him. The initiate thus became conscious of it and sought to overcome what otherwise remained in the subconscious. Many Knights learned to know the devilish urge that takes possession of the will and feeling to debase the Mystery of Golgotha. In the dream pictures by which many such initiates were haunted, appeared in vision the reverse, as it were, of the veneration of the symbol of the crucifix. This was possible owing to the way in which the initiation had come about, and particularly because the luciferic forces had stood close by with their temptation. He saw in vision how the human soul could become capable of dishonoring the symbol of the Cross and the holy ritual of the Consecration of the Host. He saw those human forces that urge men to return to ancient paganism, to worship what the pagans worshipped and to scorn the advance to Christianity. These men knew how the human soul could succumb to such temptation since they had to overcome it consciously.

You are looking here into a life of soul of which outer history relates but little. Philip the Fair, through his ahri-manic gold initiation, had also a correct knowledge of these facts of soul life, even if only instinctively. He knew enough of it, however, to be able to communicate it to his vassals. Now, after a cruel judicial process had been contrived involving all manner of investigation, a course of action, decided upon beforehand, was begun. Plots were made, instigated by Philip together with his vassals who had been summoned to make investigations against the Knights. Although they were innocent, they were accused of every imaginable vice. One day in France they were suddenly attacked and thrown into prison. During their confinement their treasures were seized.

It is one of the saddest chapters of human history, but one that can only be understood if one sees clearly that behind the veil of what is related by history stand active forces, and that human life is truly a battlefield. Because of lack of time, I will omit all that might be said further on this subject, but it would be easy to show how there is every ostensible reason for condemning the Knights Templar. Many stood by their avowals, many fled; the majority were condemned and, as stated, even the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was forced under torture to speak in the way described. Thus it came about that Philip the Fair, Philip IV of France was able to succeed in convincing his vassal, Pope Clement V—it was not difficult—that the Knights had committed the most shameful crimes, that they were the most unchristian heretics. All this the Pope sanctioned with his benediction, and the Order of the Templar was dissolved. Fifty-four Knights, including Jacques de Molay, were burned at the stake. Shortly afterward in other European countries—in

England, Spain, then right into Central Europe and Italy—action was also taken against them. Trials were now arranged in which, entirely under the influence of Philip, torture was extensively employed. Every Knight to be found was subjected to the severest torture. Here, therefore, torture was also used to take life, the significance of which you have already learned to know. The intention of Philip was to put to the rack as many persons as possible, and the torture was applied in the cruelest way, so that many of the harassed Knights lost consciousness. Philip knew that the pictures of the temptations emerged when, in terrible agony on the rack, their consciousness became clouded. He knew: the images of temptation come out! Under his instigation a catechism of leading questions was so arranged that the answers were always suggested in the way the questions were put. The Knights' answers were, of course, given out of a consciousness dulled by the torture. They were asked, "Have you denied the Host and refrained from speaking the words of Consecration?" In their clouded consciousness the Knights acknowledged these things. The powers opposing the good spoke out of their vision and, whereas in their conscious life they brought the deepest reverence to the symbol of the Cross and the Crucifix, they now accused themselves of spitting upon it; they accused themselves of the most dreadful crimes, which normally lived in their subconscious as temptations. So from the admissions made by the tortured Knights, the story was fabricated that they had worshipped an idol instead of Christ, an idol of a human head with luminous eyes; that on their admittance to the Order they were subjected to repulsive sexual procedures of the vilest nature; that they did not conduct the Transubstantiation in the right way;

that they committed the worst sexual offences; that even on their admittance to the Order they forswore the Mystery of Golgotha. The catechizing had been so well organized that even the Grand Master of the order had been tortured into making these subconscious avowals.

Thus we see how the interpretation of the Mystery of Golgotha and its influence penetrated into the midst of European evolution through the Order of the Templar. In a deeper sense, however, these things must be looked upon as determined by a certain necessity. Humanity was not yet ripe to receive the impulse of wisdom, beauty and strength in the way the Knights desired. Besides, it was determined on grounds we have yet to learn, grounds that lie in the whole spiritual development of Europe, that the spiritual world was not to be attained in the way in which the Templars entered it. It would have been gained too quickly, which is the luciferic way. We actually behold here a most important twofold attack of the forces of Lucifer and Ahriman: Lucifer urging the Knights on, driving them into their misfortune, and Ahriman working actively through the inspiration of Philip the Fair. We see here a significant twofold attack effected in world history.

But what lived and worked in the Knights Templar could not be eradicated. Spiritual life cannot be rooted out; it lives and works on further. With the Knights, notably with the fifty-four who had been burned at the stake through the agency of Philip, many a soul was certainly drawn up into the spiritual world who would still have done much work on the earth in the spirit of the Templar Order, and who would also have attracted pupils to work in the same spirit. But it had to turn out differently. In the spiritual world these souls lived through those

experiences they had undergone in the most terrible agonies that were brought about under the influence of the visionary avowals extorted through torture. Their impulses, which now, between their death and their next birth, go out to souls who have since descended, and also to souls who are still above awaiting incarnation, must be metamorphosed from the character of the activity of the physical earthly world into spiritual activity. What now came from the souls of the Knights, who had been murdered in this pitiful way and who before their death by burning had to undergo the most frightful experience a man can suffer, was to become for many others a principle of inspiration. Powerful impulses were to flow down into humanity. We can prove this in the case of many human souls.

Today, however, we will keep more to the sphere of knowledge and intellect as we have done also in the other examples given in recent days. Inspiration from the cosmic knowledge of the Knights Templar—this was always given. The fact that ultimately people came to look on the Templars as heretics after they had been burned to death is not to be wondered at; nor is it to be wondered at that people also believed they had committed all sorts of infamous crimes. Had someone been pleased to condemn as specially heretical the Devil's act, which has just been presented here, in which Mephistopheles, the Lemures and the thick and thin Devils appear, perhaps—I do not know—countless persons in the nation would also look on that as something heretical.\* The methods of Philip the Fair are, however, no longer employed in the present rather more lamentable times. The cosmic wisdom that

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\* A performance of *Faust* had probably just taken place.

these Knights possessed has entered many souls. One could cite many examples of how the inspiration of the Knights Templar had been drawn into souls. I will read you a passage from the poem "Ahasver" by Julius Mosen, which appeared in 1838. As you can read in the lecture cycles, I have often referred to Julius Mosen, the author of the profound poem "Ritter Wahn" (Knight Chimera). In the very first canto of the third section of "Ahasver," Mosen leads his hero to those parts of the earth where, in Ceylon and the neighboring islands, the region is to be sought that we describe in the cosmology of our spiritual science as the approximate locale of Lemurian evolution. This region of the earth is distinguished in a special way. You know that the magnetic north pole is located at a different point from that of the geographic North Pole. Mag-



netic needles everywhere point toward the magnetic north pole and one can draw magnetic meridians that meet at this point. Up in North America where the magnetic north pole lies, these magnetic meridians go round the earth in straight lines. Remarkably, however, in the Lemurian

region the magnetic meridians become sinuous serpentine lines. The magnetic forces are twisted into a serpentine form in this region. People notice these things far too little today. One who sees the living earth, however, knows that magnetism is like a force vivifying the earth.

In the north it goes straight, and in the region of old Lemuria it goes in a tortuous winding line. Just think

how profoundly Julius Mosen speaks as he sends his Ahasver toward this region in the first canto of the third epoch—it is divided in epochs—of the poem:

In line direct and straight from Southern Pole  
Takes the Magnetic Line its chosen course,  
When suddenly it twines in serpent-curve

There before India and its neighbor isles  
Before the dungeon where in deepest woe  
Sits the Eternal Mother ever bound.

In circle form the Line drew back its length,  
And twining swift and secret on itself  
With a single plunge in swirling vortex fell.

There the Great Spirit in a first embrace  
Held the poor spouse, and from their ardent fire  
Sprang the Earth demons instantly to life.

When thus the first creation came to naught,  
The Great, the Nameless Spirit in his wrath  
Stamped down the bridal couch beneath the sea.

So it goes on. We see inspiration emerge with wonderfully intuitive knowledge. The wisdom lives on that could only enter the world amid sufferings, tortures, persecutions and the most frightful offences. Nevertheless, it lives on in spiritualized form.

When we seek the most beautiful spiritualizations of this wisdom that has entered the development of Europe, as we have described, then we find one precisely in all that would work and live in the powerful imaginations of

Goethe. Goethe knew the secret of the Templars. Not without purpose has he used gold as he has done in his fairytale "The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily", in which he made the snake consume the gold and then sacrifice itself. By this deed the gold is wrested from the powers with which Goethe truly knew it must not be allowed to remain. Gold—naturally everything is also meant here of which gold is a real symbol. Read once more fairytale "The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily" and try to feel how Goethe knew the secret of gold, how, through the way in which he let gold flow through the fairy tale, he is looking back into earlier times. May I perhaps add here the personal confession that when for the first time in the eighties of the last century, I faced the question of the gold in Goethe's fairy tale, the meaning of the story emerged for me through the development of the gold in it.

Through the way in which Goethe lets gold flow through this fairy tale, he shows how he looks back into the time in which wisdom—for which gold also stands, hence, "The Golden King of Wisdom"—was exposed to such persecutions as those described. Now, he sought to show past, present and future. Goethe saw instinctively into the future of eastern European civilization. He could see how unjustifiable is the way in which the problem of sin and death worked there. If we wished to designate, not quite inappropriately perhaps, the nationality of the man who is then led to the Temple and the Beautiful Lily, who appears at first as without vigor as if crippled, then, from what we have had to say recently about the culture of the East and of Russia, you will not consider it unreasonable to deem this man to be a Russian. In so doing, you will almost certainly follow the line of Goethe's

instinct. The secret of European evolution in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch lies concealed within this fairy tale, just as truly as Goethe was able to conceal it in his

In Goethe we have a true continuation of the life of the Knights Templar but, as I have said, in a spiritualized way. This Goetheanism, however, will only be able to enter slowly and gradually into human understanding. I have already shown in certain respects how the impulse for everything of a spiritually scientific nature lies in Goetheanism. All of spiritual science can be developed from Goethe. I have shown in a public lecture (Berlin, April 15, 1916) that I gave a short time ago how the first elementary scientific foundation for the doctrine of reincarnation, of repeated earth lives, lies in Goethe's doctrine of metamorphosis. He begins the teaching of metamorphosis by showing how the leaf changes into the blossom, how an organ appears in different forms. When one follows this through with penetration, there lies implicit in it what I have often explained here; that is, the head of man is the transformed body, and the rest of the body is a human head still to be transformed. Here is metamorphosis in the ultimate degree, which for science will develop into a direct knowledge of reincarnation, of repeated earthly lives. But Goethe is still but little understood; he must first become familiar in the cultural life of humanity. Not only centuries but millenniums will be needed in order to unravel what lies in Goethe. As a matter of fact, even today there is not a foundation for a study of Goethe such as a monograph or biography could provide that would be produced really in his very style.

Let us see what has been done in particular instances in modern culture toward the understanding of Goethe's personality. We can, of course, only cite single examples.

Herman Grimm has, however, rightly said, "A certain Mr. Lewes has written a book, which was for some time the most famous book on Goethe; one can even say the best. It is a book treating of a personality who was supposed to have been born in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1749, and to have had a Frankfurt councilor for a father. He then developed and grew up in such a way that Goethe's youth was ascribed to him, along with all sorts of other things taken from Goethe. Goethe's works were attributed to him; he also traveled to Italy in the same year as Goethe, and died the same year Goethe died. This person, however, is

Then we also have a relatively good book in which Goethe's life and creative work is described with immense industry and better than many other works on Goethe. It is filled, however, from the first to the last page with hatred and aversion. This book is by the Jesuit, Baumgartner. It is an excellent but, in fact, a Jesuitical, book; but antagonistic to Goethe. At least, it is better written than the countless others on Goethe that have appeared throughout the nineteenth century and now on into the twentieth. A great number of these works are unpalatable. One continually sneezes because the dust of the library and professor gets into one's nose. They have been written by pedants who

One book, however, stands out in a quite unusual way. These are Herman Grimm's lectures on Goethe given in the seventies at Berlin University. Grimm was, as we can see, a spirit who had the best will and the most wonderful traditions to aid him in familiarizing himself with Goethe. His book is an intelligent and excellent one that has developed right out of the Goethean atmosphere. Grimm grew up in the age when there were still

Goethean traditions, but this book shows something quite remarkable. In fact, in a certain respect it is not at all a book that has developed from Goethean traditions; it is both Goethean and un-Goethean. For Herman Grimm does not write in a Goethean style but, strangely enough, in a style that leads one to say that the book was written by an American, a German American! One can call Grimm's lectures a book written by an American but in German. In style it is American—a style in which Grimm has educated himself. As one of the most enthusiastic followers of Emerson, he has studied him, read, digested, translated him, has quite familiarized himself with him. Now, Grimm finds his way into this American-Emerson style so that he is complete master of it; at the same time he grows enthusiastic about it. One can see at once on reading his novel,

In spite of all this, much, very much in the spiritual life of man must come about before Goethe and similar spirits will be understood! If sometimes they are rightly understood, it must be in quite another way from that of Herman Grimm. Once, in a conversation with him, I wished to make just a few references to the path by which one could gradually enter the spiritual world. The movement of his right arm will always remain unforgettable—a gesture of warding off; he wanted to push that aside. He created a Goethe who is simply delightful to see from outside, but one does not see into his heart. This Goethe of Grimm's, as he makes his way through historical development, as he stands there, as he moves about and comes into relation with people, as human relations flow into his works, as the contemporary world conception flows into his works—this Goethe goes past our mind's eye as a ghost who flits through the world unseen by the

living. Goethe will only be understood when one has deepened Goetheanism to become spiritual science. Then, much will emerge from Goethe that he could not express himself. Goethe, truly understood, leads, in fact, to spiritual science, which is really developed Goetheanism.

From the beginning Goethe also understood that Christianity is a living thing. How he longed for a possible expression for the Christianizing of the modern world conception. It did not lie in his time to find it, but in the new age spiritual science is already working to attain it. Let us take his poem, "The Mysteries," in which Brother Mark is guided to the Temple where the Rose Cross is on the door, and let us look at the whole picture. We shall see that the Christian mood is in this fragment, "The Mysteries," the mood born of the feeling that the symbol of the Cross becomes a picture of life through the living roses entwining it! Then, too Goethe lets his

A longing for the full Christianizing of the treasures of wisdom concerning the cosmos and earthly evolution gradually broke through—a longing for the full Christianizing of earthly life so that suffering, pain and grief appear as the earth's Cross, which then finds its comfort, its elevation, its salvation in the Rose symbol of the Crucifix. Repeatedly in men thus inspired, in whom lived on what was thought to have been destroyed with the burning of the Templars—in these inspired men lived ever again the ideal that in the place of what brings strife and quarrels something must appear that can bring good to earth, and this good may be pictured in the symbol of the Cross in conjunction with the roses.

The book *Ruins* by Anastasius Grün has been given to me today by one of our members. I have here again the

same verses that I read to you some time ago to confirm the fact that this mystery, which this poem also expresses, is not merely something put forward by us, but that it comes to life again and again. Anastasius Grün, the Austrian poet, composed these poems; the eighth edition appeared in 1847. In his own manner he wrote of the progress of mankind, and I will read again today the passage I read years ago as proof of the role played by the image of the Rose Cross in evolving humanity; that is, among those who are incarnated in the new age. Anastasius Grün turn his gaze toward Palestine and other regions after having described how much confused fighting and quarreling has been spread over the earth. After he has seen and described much that causes fighting and strife he, who is a great seer in a certain way, turns to a region of the earth that he describes thus. I cannot read all of it as it would take too long, but one's eye is first turned to a part of the earth where the ploughshare is used.

As children once were digging in a meadow  
 They brought a shapeless thing of iron to light,  
 It seemed too straight, too heavy for a sickle,  
 For plough it was too slender and too slight.

With toil they dragged it home as new found treasure;  
 The elders see it, yet they know it not;  
 They call the neighbors round within the circle,  
 The neighbors see it, yet they know it not.

There is an ancient graybeard, wan and sallow,  
 Whose lifetime lingers on like tale forgot  
 Into the present world of busy dealing,  
 They show it to him, but he knows is not.

Well for them all, that they have never know it,  
Else must they weep, and still must be deplored  
The folly of their fathers, long since buried,  
For what was known by no one was a sword!

Henceforth it shall but cleave the earth as ploughshare;  
Shall point the seed corn's path into the ground,  
The sword's new hero deeds are peened  
When sun-filled airs with song of lark resound.

Once more it came to pass, that in his plowing  
The farmer struck what seemed a piece of stone.  
And as his spade unloosed the earthy covers,  
A structure of a wondrous shape was shown.

He calls the neighbors round within the circle;  
They look at it but still they know it not.  
Wise and aged one, you'll surely tell us?  
The greybeard looks at it, yet knows it not.

Thus, in plowing, something was dug up and even the  
aged man does not recognize it.

Though known to none, yet with its ancient blessing  
Eternal in their breast it stands upright,  
Scatters its seed around in every roadway;  
A Cross it was, this stranger to their sight!

They saw the fight not, and its bloodstained symbol,  
They see alone the victory and the crown,  
They saw the storm not, and the lashing tempest  
They only see the rainbow's glistening shine.

The Cross will always be known, even in a region where it was already buried and drawn out of the earth as a cross of stone, where civilization has so withdrawn that an un-Christian culture has developed. There, Anastasius Grün wishes to say, a cross is found and men know it in their inmost breasts, even though the oldest among them fails to recognize it through tradition.

Though known to one, yet with its ancient blessing  
Eternal in their breast it stands upright,  
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They saw the fight not and its bloodstained symbol,  
They see alone the victory and the crown,  
They saw the storm not and the lashing tempest  
They only see the rainbow's glistening shine.

The Cross of stone they set up in the garden;  
A venerable relic strange and old,  
Flowers of all species lift their growth above it,  
While roses climbing high the Cross enfold.

So stands the Cross weighty with solemn meaning  
On Golgotha, amidst resplendent sheen;  
Long since 'tis hidden by its wealth of roses;  
No more, for roses, can the Cross be seen.

But it is there! There is the Cross! There are the roses! One only learns the meaning of history when one turns one's gaze to what lives in the spiritual and pervades human evolution, when, too, one will turn one's attention to

what shows us under what auspices, under what insignia things enter world history. I think that one can feel the deeper connection between what we have characterized for later times and what has been characterized in the ideal of the Knights Templar and their fate in the world at the beginning of the fourteenth century.