

**Advanced Core Concepts**  
**Independent Study Module No. 46**

**The Ring of the Niebelung: "The Twilight of the Gods"**  
**[continued]**

When Siegfried reaches the court of Gunther, Gutrune, the fair sister of the king hands him the magic cup of forgetfulness. Forthwith, he loses memory of the past and of Brunhilde, the spirit of truth, and stands a naked soul ready to fight the battle of life. But he is armed with the sublimated essence of former experience. The sword of Nothung, the courage of despair, wherewith he fought greed and creed symbolized by Fafner, the dragon, and Wotan the god, is still with him; also Tarncap, or the helmet of illusion, which is an apt symbol of what we in modern times call hypnotic power, for whoever put this magic cap on his head appeared to others in whatever shape he desired; and he has Brunhilde's horse Grane, discernment, whereby he, himself, might always perceive truth and distinguish it from error and illusion. He still has powers which he may use for good or evil according to choice.

As we have said previously, our idea of what truth is changes as we progress. We are gradually climbing the mountain trail of evolution, and as we do phases of truth appear which we never before perceived; and what is right at one stage, is wrong at

another. Though, whenever we are in the flesh we see through the veil of illusion symbolized by Loge's flame which encircles the rock of Brunhilde, her swift charger Grane, discernment is also with us; and if we only give him free rein, the material brain-mind, which is charged with the lethal drink of forgetfulness, can never gain the ascendancy over the Spirit.

The early [Atlantean Epoch](#), when mankind lived as guileless "Children of the Mist" (Niebelung) in the foggy basins of the Earth, is represented in the Rhinegold. The later Atlantean time is an age of savagery, where mankind has forsworn love, as Alberich did, and forms "the Ring" of egoism, where it devotes its energies to material acquisitions symbolized by "the hoard" of the Niebelung, over which giants, gods, and men fight with savage brutality and low cunning, as set forth in the "The Valkuerie."

The early [Fifth, post-Atlantean Epoch](#) marks the birth of the idealist, symbolized as the "Walsungs" (Siegmond, Sieglinda, and Siegfried), a new race which aspires with a sacred ardor to new and higher things—valorous knights who had the courage of their convictions and were ever ready to fight for truth as they saw it, and to give their lives as forfeit to uphold their heartfelt convictions. Thus the age of realistic savagery gave place to an era of idealistic chivalry.

We are now in the latter part of the Fifth Epoch. The truth seekers of the past have again left the fire girt rock of Brunhilde. We have again assumed the veil of flesh and partaken of the lethal drink, and we are today actually playing the last part of the great epic drama, "The Twilight of the Gods," which is identical in its import with our Christian Apocalypse. "The gospel of the Kingdom" has been preached to us, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" has been opened to us, as it was to Siegfried; and we are on trial now,

as he was at Gunther's court, to see if we will live as "married to truth," or whether we will drag her from her retreat and prostitute her, as Siegfried did. In order to gain the hand of Gutrune, he wrested the emblem of egoism, the Ring of the Niebelung, from Brunhilde's hand and put it on his finger again; he bound her and carried her to Gunther to be his wife; he prostituted her, and himself committed adultery with Gutrune—for having once married truth, it is spiritual adultery to seek the honors of the world.

Heaven and Earth are outraged at this colossal betrayal of truth. The great World-Ash, the tree of life and being, shakes at its root, where Urd, Skuld, and Verdande, the past, present, and future, spin the thread of fate. It grows dark on Earth; Hagen's spear finds the only vulnerable point in Siegfried's body—his life is the forfeit, and as the highest ideal of the age has failed, there is no use in perpetuating the existing order of things. Therefore, Heimdal, the heavenly watchman, sounds his trumpet, and the gods ride in solemn procession over the rainbow bridge for the last time, to meet the giants in final battle involving the destruction of heaven and Earth.

This is a very significant point: at the opening of the drama we find the Niebelungen "at the bottom of the river." Alberich later forges "the Ring" in fire, which can only burn in the clear atmosphere such as we have in the post-Atlantean age. During this age the gods also hold their sacred councils at the rainbow bridge, which is the reflection of the heavenly fire. When Noah brought [the original Semites](#) through "the Flood," he kindled the fire. "The bow" was then set in the cloud to remain for the age and during that time it was covenanted that the alternating cycles, summer and winter, day and night, et cetera, should not cease. In the Apocalypse (IV:3), John is offered instruction concerning "things which must be hereafter," by "One having a rainbow

around Him"; and later (X:16), a mighty Angel with a rainbow on its head solemnly proclaims the end of time. Thus it is plain from the northern myth and the Christian teaching, that the epoch began when the bow was set in the cloud; when the bow is removed the epoch will end and a new condition of things physical and spiritual, will be ushered in.

The other phenomenon attending this time of trouble is set forth in the ancient myth. Loge, the spirit of illusion, has three children: the Midgaard Serpent which encircles the Earth, biting its own tail, is the ocean which refracts and distorts every object immersed therein. Men fear the treacherous element; their cheeks have always paled at the thought of what it may do when unleashed. The wolf Fenris, the atmosphere, is also a child of illusion (optical), and the dread roar of the tempest may strike fear into the stoutest heart. Hel, death, is the third of loge's children, and the "queen of terrors." Before man entered concrete existence, as described in the beginning of the great myth and in Genesis, his consciousness was focused in the spiritual worlds where the illusive elements, Loge (fire), Fenris (air), and the Serpent (water), are nonexistent; hence, death also was an unknown quantity. But during the present epoch when the constitution of the human body is subject to the action of the elements, death also holds sway.

At the sound of the trumpet of Heimdal, all the factors of destruction press forward to the plain Vigrid, the counterpart of Armageddon, where the gods of creed and their sworn supporters have assembled to make a last stand. The sons of Muspel (physical fire), press forward from the south, demolishing the rainbow bridge. The Frost Giants advance from the north. With an awful roar, Fenris, the tempest-driven atmosphere, rushes upon the Earth. So terrific is its velocity that the friction generates fire, hence it is said that its lower jaw is upon the Earth, its upper

reaches the Sun, and fire streams from its nostrils. It swallows Wotan, the god in charge of the age of air, when the bow was in the cloud. The Midgaard Serpent or watery element is vanquished by Thor, the god of thunder and lightning, but when the electrical discharges have finally disposed of the element, water, there can be no thunder and lightning, hence the northern myth informs us that Thor dies of the fumes from the Serpent. In our Christian Apocalypse we also hear of thunders and lightnings, and are told that finally "there shall be no more sea."

But as the Phoenix arises rejuvenated and beautiful from its ashes, so also a New Earth, fairer and more ethereal, was seen by the ancient prophetess to arise from the great conflagration where "the elements melt with fervent heat"—"Gimle," she called it. Nor was it without population, for while the great conflagration was in progress a man and a woman called Lif and Liftharaser (lif means life) were saved and from them springs a new race which lives in peace and close to God.

"A hall I see,  
More brilliant than the Sun,  
Roofed with gold.  
On the summit of Gimle,  
There shall live  
A virtuous race,  
An enjoy blessedness  
To eternity.

"Thither cometh the Mighty One-all-Father,  
To the council of the gods,  
In His strength from above.  
He who thinketh for all,  
Issueth judgments;  
He causeth strife to cease,

And establisheth peace  
To endure forever."

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Thus the ancient northern myth teaches, but from a different angle, the same truths as found in greater fullness in the Christian Scriptures from Genesis to the Apocalypse, and it is important that we should realize the truth of these tales. There are, alas, too many in the class described by Peter as saying: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were in the beginning." There are few who realize the import of the statement in the second chapter of Genesis, that "a mist went up from the ground and watered the earth before it rained," and that thus the children of the mist must have been physiologically different from the man of today who breathes air since "the Flood," when the mist condensed and became the sea. But just as sure as these changes happened in the past, so there is now another change impending. True, it may not come in our time—"that hour knoweth no man, neither [the Angels](#), neither the Son," and repeatedly the warning of Noah is held up before us in this connection. In that day they ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, but suddenly the waters engulfed them and all who had not evolved the physiological requisites, lungs, necessary to live in the new condition perished. The Ark carried the pioneers safely through the catastrophe.

To make the next change safely, [a Wedding Garment](#) is required, and it is of utmost importance that we should work upon it. The soma psuchicon or "[soul body](#)" which Paul mentions (I Cor. XI:44), is an etheric vehicle of paramount importance; for when the present elements have been dissolved in the impending

change, how shall we survive if we can function only in a dense body as now!

Before the Sixth Epoch is definitely ushered in, there is being prepared the seed for the New Age. It is exactly the mission of [the Rosicrucian Order](#) to promulgate a scientific method of development suited particularly to the Western people whereby this [Wedding Garment](#) may be wrought, so that we may hasten the day of the Lord.

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### Questions:

**[You are welcome to [e-mail](#) your answers and/or comments to us. Please be sure to include the course name and Independent Study Module number in your e-mail to us. Or, you are also welcome to use the [answer form below](#). (*Java required*)]**

- 1.** Although Siegfried loses memory of the past, with what is he armed to fight the battle of life?
  - 2.** What did realistic savagery give way to in the early Fifth Epoch?
  - 3.** Why was it spiritual adultery for Siegfried to seek the honors of the world?
  - 4.** Give the mythological interpretation of Siegfried forfeiting his life at the hands of Hagen.
  - 5.** According to the Northern Myth, by whom will the new earth be populated and how will they live?
  - 6.** What will be required of us that we may survive the coming of the New Age?
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