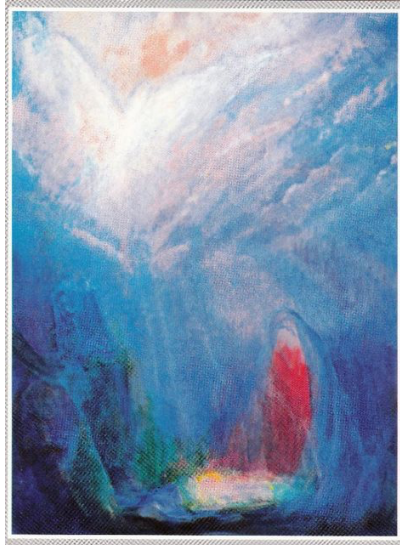


# Anthroposophical Society in New Hampshire Advent and Christmas Newsletter 2018



Ninetta Sombart—Annunciation to the Shepherds

## Rudolf Steiner's Calendar of the Soul Verses

### WINTER

To carry spirit light into  
World-winter-night  
My heart is ardently impelled,  
That shining seeds of soul  
Take root in grounds of worlds  
And Word Divine through senses'  
darkness  
Resounds, transfiguring all life.

### CHRISTMAS

I feel, free of enchantment,  
The spirit child in my soul's core;  
In heart-high gladness has  
The holy cosmic Word engendered  
The heavenly fruit of hope,  
Which grows rejoicing into  
farthest worlds  
Out of my being's godly roots.

### December 29-January 4

Surrendering to spirit revelation  
I gain the light of cosmic being;  
The power of thinking, growing  
clearer,  
Gains strength to give myself to  
me,  
And quickening there frees itself  
From thinker's might my sense of  
Self.

Once again, I'd like to share the Advent poem from Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, a close personal student and friend of Rudolf Steiner and a pioneer of the Biodynamic Agriculture work here in the USA. This document was found in the Pfeiffer Archives at the Fellowship Community in Chestnut Ridge, NY, with the kind help of Ann Scharff, whose husband, Dr. Paul Scharff organized the archive. *If anyone has a thought concerning the Being Pfeiffer is describing, I would like to hear from you. Thanks, Alice*

## ADVENT THOUGHTS

1<sup>st</sup> of ADVENT 1960

by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer

As the creative gaze of the beneficent father  
Rested upon his creation  
And the light arose from the darknesses -  
Arose out of free will, a sublime spiritual being -  
This being chose ~~as~~ its task  
To preserve for all eternities  
The moment of divine rest and of divine satisfaction.

Genesis I,31: "*And God gazed upon everything  
he had made. And see, it was very good.*"

The translators didn't quite grasp this, it should say:

"And see, it was full of goodness.

The pure goodness (beneficence) and devotion of the Father Being"

Which drew forth, out of the  
self -creating and self-renewing spirit-warmth  
the strength to radiate LIFE.  
(in contrast to dead matter)  
And thus birthing the living substance world.

-and to unite, with the sacrificing wisdom of the fatherly creative thought, the  
formative Light:

therewith preserving eternally creating beauty, permeated  
by light and warmth in all beings and all existence:

This is the task of that sublime divine being.

This being lives in everything, in all appearances  
from which light is sent out or is received or is reflected -  
where light works and fire born seed arises and is preserved -  
it lives in nature, in cosmic expanses and  
in human beings.

In every radiance of light, in the universe, upon earth,  
in the stars, in human hearts:

This being unites the memory of the creative act  
with the strength (power) of the Father of eternal renewal.



Light's beauty and warmth is maintained by this being for nature,  
is granted to the human being.

Warmth, which radiates and sacrifices itself,  
selflessly, not consuming warmth, from human to human.

This being is the WITNESS of the sun's birth;  
It is the guardian and the seal-bearer of the vitalizing power of the sun,  
the witness of the Christ on the sun.  
It is the cosmic conscience.

With the Advent of Christ on earth it  
entered into human souls.  
His name is too sublime to be expressed.  
He is the "Companion" the Witness.  
He was before the creation of time and will continue to exist after the  
disappearance of earthly matter and the extinction of the earth time.

Zarathustra calls him the "Companion"  
(which is more than only the guardian Angel).  
Lucifer, the fallen, was related to this being;  
he too holds sway through light and beauty,  
but he lacks the sacrificing warmth  
of Father and Son, lacks the intimate understanding.  
He is only for himself, never for others,  
his beauty does not give warmth and does not birth life.

Human beings, who know and acknowledge  
the archetypal laws of creation find this being.

And where I unites with I, permeating  
beauty and warmth with love and devotion  
there this being can work and be known.  
Like a magic breath it hovers between all  
appearances of the world.

Light within apprehends light from outside.  
Warmth within feels warmth from outside,  
Light within unites with warmth from outside  
Warmth within unites with light from outside.  
Thus the messenger of the high spirit being it birthed  
In me, as witness of creation, the guardian of the sun.

This Spirit being sends his messenger to the earth,  
whom we know and revere as the  
"Angel of Pure Goodness".

The "Angel of Pure Goodness", who every evening  
steps forth from the gate of the West, the  
gate of the setting sun, which is also  
the gate of Michael, and the gate through which  
the souls of the deceased pass --

Every evening the "Angel of Pure Goodness" steps forth to stride over the  
domains of the earth,  
blessing them and to enter the hearts of human beings.

The "Angel of Pure Goodness" leads us too, guides and warms the intellect, and  
illuminates the heart.

The "Angel of Pure Goodness" permeates the substances of nature and  
elevates them out of the lifeless into the realm of life.

The "Angel of Pure Goodness" prepares the path for the Christ, so that human  
beings recognize Him and the kingdoms of nature receive Him.

(it is the Angel over the waters, whose wings moisten the dew of life).

In him lives the sublime guiding Being -- whose name is:  
*"and see the World was full of Goodness."*



In the radiance of the star of Bethlehem (the Kings)  
and in the mild shining of the angel of Buddha (the Shepherds)  
this sublime Light Being was active  
to help the Kings and the Shepherds,  
to comprehend the significant message and to heed it.  
When one human being apprehends the eternal in another (wakes up on the  
other)  
and beholds the Light-soul, as Zarathustra called it,  
then this being is active and mediates knowing.

Where Soul-Eye is mirrored in Soul-Eye  
Where Spirit-Light shines forth on Spirit-Eye  
Where Warmth ignites itself on Warmth,  
There this being is active and finds an abode.

It is not the Christ, but the companion of the Christ.  
It is not Michael, but a brother of Michael.  
As Michael was called Vohu Manas by Zarathustra = the power of pure reason.  
So this being is one of the Amshaspands, the Eloha  
Michael = the face of God  
This being = the radiant warmth (goodness, beneficence) of God.

Goethe experienced this being when he said (Faust I):  
*"the stars harbor Gaze and Semblance "  
"greeting the etheric dawn"*

Like can only comprehend like:  
Light comprehends light  
Warmth warms itself on warmth  
Goodness takes hold of goodness.

My soul opens itself to the power of pure goodness.

When I look, the light in me beholds.  
When I breathe, heaven's air is breathing in me.  
When I love, the Spirit in me comprehends.  
My being gives itself over to the other being  
and finds the other in me.

Where God is, there is Wisdom, there is Light.  
Where God is, there is Goodness, there is Love.  
Where God's eternal creation is active, there is Truth and Life.  
God in me --- I for the God  
Christ leads God to me and me to God.

*"And see the world is full of goodness."*  
(There out of evening and morning was the 6<sup>th</sup> day.)

EEP

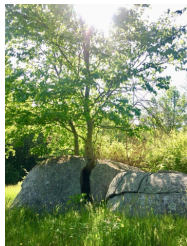


A festival study group has formed with the intention to reflect upon and explore of the festivals through the year. The Book *The Festivals and their Meaning* is the seed text and will be used through Advent season, yet the land of Abbot Hill arose as a strong presence. Goethean Conversation led to a deep intrigue with the genius loci of this land.

After much contemplation of what is asked of us in our global society at this time, we arrived at the convergence point of festivals in relation to the mineral, plant, animal, and human worlds.

The study circle gathers the first Saturday of each month from 3:30 pm until 4:30 pm alternating between the McFee home at 476 Abbot Hill Rd and at Jenny Foster's home atop the Hilltop Cafe.

At the close of our last study group, members shared separate and profound experiences of observing, over many years, the growth of a tree through a granite rock in the farm field.



A photo and quote about this Abbot Hill landmark by Lauryn Morley, "Coexistence without struggle: The nature of the tree to take root and grow, the grace of the rock to open and create space."

**Upcoming festival group meeting dates:**

December 1, 2018

January 5, 2019

February 2, 2019

March 2, 2019

April 6, 2019

May 4, 2019

June 1, 2019

Please contact Kat McFee at [katmcfee16@gmail.com](mailto:katmcfee16@gmail.com) with questions.

The following lecture by Rudolf Steiner is the reading for the December meeting.

**The Festivals and Their Meaning: Christmas**

**Christmas at a Time of Grievous Destiny**

*Lecture from Rudolf Steiner, Basle, 21st December, 1916*

THE yearly celebration of the physical birth of the Being Who entered earth-evolution in order to give that evolution its meaning, has for many people become a matter of habit. But if, conformably with the task of our spiritual-scientific movement, we are not content with celebrating a festival of mere custom — as is so general nowadays — it will be opportune at this grave time to turn our minds to many things that are connected with the physical birth of Christ Jesus.

We have often pictured how in Christ Jesus, so far as human comprehension goes, two Beings merge as it were into one: the Christ Being and the human Jesus Being. In the evolution of Christianity there has been much conflict, much conflict of dogma, about the meaning of the union of Christ with Jesus, in the Being whose physical birth is celebrated at the Christmas Festival. We ourselves, of course, recognise in the Christ a cosmic, super-earthly Being, a Being Who descended from spiritual worlds in order, through His birth in a physical man, to impart meaning to earth-evolution. And in

Jesus we recognise the one who, as man, was predestined after thirty years of preparation, to unite the Christ Being with himself, to receive the Christ Being into himself.

Not only has there been much strife, much conflict of dogma, about the nature of the union of Christ with Jesus, but the relationship of Christ to Jesus contains a hint of significant secrets of the earthly evolution of mankind. If, in the endeavour to understand something of the union of Christ with Jesus, we follow events up to the present day and reflect upon what has still to take place in the evolution of humanity before this relationship can be rightly understood, then we touch upon one of the deepest secrets of human knowledge and human life.

At the time when Christ was about to enter the evolution of humanity, it was possible, through faculties that were a heritage from the days of the old clairvoyant wisdom, to form certain conceptions of the sublimity of the Christ Being. And at that time there existed a wisdom of which people often speak nowadays in a way that is almost blasphemous, but of which they are scarcely able to form any true idea. There existed something which up to this day has been completely exterminated from human evolution, rooted out by certain currents running counter to the deeper Christian revelation: this was the *Gnosis*, a wisdom into which had flowed much of the ancient knowledge revealed to men in atavistic clairvoyance. Every trace of the *Gnosis*, whether in script or oral tradition, was exterminated root and branch by the dogmatic Christianity of the West — after this *Gnosis* had striven to find an answer to the question: Who is the Christ?

There can be no question to-day of reverting to the *Gnosis* — for the *Gnosis* belongs to an age that is past and over. True, its extermination was caused by malice, ignorance, enmity towards knowledge and wisdom ... but for all that it happened out of an underlying necessity. When anthroposophical spiritual science is accused of wanting to revive the ancient *Gnosis*, that is only one of the many expressions of ill-will directed towards it to-day. The accusation is, of course, made by people whose ignorance of the *Gnosis* is on a par with their ignorance of Anthroposophy. There is no question of reviving the *Gnosis*, but of recognising it as something great and mighty, something that endeavoured, in the time now lying nineteen hundred years behind us, to give an answer to the question: Who is the Christ?

Before the inner eye of the Gnostic lay a glorious vista of spiritual worlds, with the Hierarchies ranged in their order, one above the other. How the Christ had descended through the worlds of the spiritual Hierarchies to enter into the sheaths of a mortal man — all this stood before the soul of the Gnostic. And he tried to envisage how the Christ had come from heights of spirit, how He had been conceived on earth. The best way to get some idea of the knowledge then existing is to reflect that everything produced by the world after the extermination of the *Gnosis* was paltry in comparison with the grandeur of the Gnostic idea of the Christ. The Mystery-wisdom behind the Gospels is infinitely great — greater by far than anything which later theology has been able to discover from them. To realise how paltry and insignificant compared with the *Gnosis* is the current conception of the Christ Being, we have but to steep ourselves in the ancient Gnostic idea of Him. Picturing this, one is filled with humility by the grandeur of the conception of the Christ Being entering into a human body from cosmic heights, from far distant cosmic worlds.

This majestic, sublime concept of Christ has fallen into the background, but all the dogmatic definitions handed down to us as Arian or Athanasian principles of faith are meagre in comparison with the Gnostic conception, in which vision of the Christ Being was combined with wisdom relating to the universe. ([Note 1](#)) Only the merest fragments of this great Gnostic conception of Christ have survived.



This, then, is one aspect of the relationship of Christ to Jesus: that Christ came into the world at a time when the wisdom capable of understanding Him, yearning to understand Him, had already been rooted out. People who speak of the ancient Gnosis as oriental phantasy that had to be exterminated for the good of Western humanity, have always believed themselves to be good Christians, but the real cause was that the mind of the age lacked the strength to unite earthly with heavenly concepts. One must have a feeling for the tragic if human evolution is to be understood.

How long after the Mystery of Golgotha was the Temple at Jerusalem, the sanctuary of peace, destroyed? The Temple of Solomon was within the precincts of the city of Jerusalem. What the Gnosis contained in the form of *wisdom*, Solomon's Temple contained in the form of *symbolism*. Cosmic secrets were presented in symbols and pictures. And it was intended that those who entered the Temple, where the pictures all around them were reflected in their souls, should receive something through which alone they became truly *man*. The purpose of the Temple of Solomon was to inculcate the meaning of worlds into the souls of those who were permitted to enter it. What the Temple revealed was something that the earth as such did not reveal, namely, all the cosmic secrets that ray into the earth from the cosmic expanse.

If one of the old Initiates possessing real knowledge of the Temple of Solomon had been asked: Why was the Temple of Solomon built? — the answer would have been somewhat as follows: 'In order that here on the earth there shall be a beacon light for those Powers who accompany the souls seeking their way into earthly bodies.' Let us try to grasp what this means, realising that these old Initiates of the Temple of Solomon knew that when men were being accompanied into earthly bodies in conformity with all the signs of the stars, then particular souls must be guided to bodies in which the great symbols of Solomon's Temple could be mirrored.

This, in the nature of things, might give rise to arrogance. If the knowledge was not received with humility, with the humility of the *Essenes*, it led men into *Pharisaism*! But at all events, this was the situation: The eye of earth looked up to the heavens, beholding the stars; the spiritual eyes of those who were guiding souls from cosmic worlds to the earth gazed downwards and beheld the Temple of Solomon with its symbols. The Temple was like a star whose light enabled them to guide the souls into bodies which would be capable of understanding its meaning. It was the central star of the earth, shining out with special brightness into the spiritual heights.

When Christ Jesus had come to the earth, when the Mystery of Golgotha had taken place, the great secret that was intended to be mirrored in every single human soul was this: "My kingdom is not of this world!" It was then that the external, physical Temple of Solomon lost its significance and its destiny was tragically fulfilled.

Moreover at that time there was no living person who would have been capable of apprehending the full compass of the Christ Being from the reflections of the symbols in Solomon's Temple. But the Christ Himself had now entered earth-evolution, had become part of it. That is the all-important fact. The Gnostics were the last survivors of the bearers of that ancient, atavistic earth-wisdom which was comprehensive and powerful enough to make some understanding of the Christ possible.

That, then, is one aspect of the relation of Christ to Jesus. In those days the Christ Being could have been understood through the Gnosis. But according to the world-plan it was not to be — although the Gnosis teemed with wisdom concerning the Christ.

And it may truly be said that the path now taken by Christianity through the countries of the South, through Greece, Italy, Spain and so on, led more and more to the obliteration of insight into the essential nature of Christ. And Rome, sinking into decline, was destined to bring about the final extinction of understanding.

In regard to this relation of the Christ to Jesus it is strange that on the one hand we find lighting up in the Gnosis a sublime conception of the *Christ* which died away as Christianity passed through the Roman system, while on the other hand, when Christianity encountered the peoples from the North, the concept of *Jesus* came to the fore. In the South, the concept of Christ flickered out. The form in which the concept of Jesus emerged was by no means very sublime, but it gripped men's hearts and feelings in such a way that something wonderfully absorbing stirred in their souls at the thought of how the Child who receives the Christ is born in the Holy Night. Just as in the South the concept of Christ was inadequate, so in the North was man's feeling for Jesus. But for all that it was a feeling that stirred the very depths of the human heart. Yet in itself it is not quite comprehensible. For if we contrast the immeasurable significance of Christ Jesus for the evolution of humanity with all the sentimental trivialities about the 'dear little Jesus' contained in many poems and hymns commonly used to move the human heart — for in their egoism men believe that these trivialities kindle emotions capable of storming the heavens — then we have a direct impression that something is striving to make its home but is not fully able to do so, that one element is mingling with another in such a way that the deeper meaning, the far deeper significance, remains in the subconsciousness. What actually is it that remains in the subconsciousness while the Jesus-thought, the Jesus-feeling, the Jesus-experience, is coming to the surface? The process takes a strange and remarkable course. The understanding for Christ sank into the subconsciousness and there, in the subconsciousness, the understanding for Jesus began to glow. In the subconsciousness — not in the consciousness, which was dim — the consciousness of Christ that was flickering out and the consciousness of Jesus that was beginning to stir were destined to meet and counter-balance each other. Why was it, then, that the peoples who came down from Scandinavia, from the North of present-day Russia, received Christianity without the Christ-idea which, to begin with, was wholly foreign to them? Why was it that they received Christianity with the Jesus-idea? Why was Christmas the festival which above all others spoke to the human heart, awakened in the human heart feelings of holy bliss? Why was it? What was present in this Europe which in truth received from the South a completely distorted Christianity? What was it that kindled in men's hearts the idea which then, in the Christmas Festival, created such a deep, deep fount of experience? Men had been prepared — but had largely forgotten by what they had been prepared. They had been prepared by the old Northern Mysteries. But they had forgotten the import and meaning of these ancient Mysteries. And we have to go very far back into the past to discover from the source and content of the Northern Mysteries the deep secret of the penetration of the Jesus-feeling into the soul-life of the European peoples.

The principles underlying the Northern Mysteries were quite different from those underlying the Mysteries of Asia Minor and of the South. The experiences underlying the Northern Mysteries were more intimately and directly connected with the existence of the stars, with nature, with earthly fertility, than with the wisdom represented in symbols within a Temple. The Mystery-truths are not the childish trifles presented by certain mystic sects to-day; the Mystery-truths are great and potent impulses in the evolution of mankind. Present-day Anthroposophy can no more revert to the Gnosis than mankind can revert to what the ancient Mysteries of the North, for example, signified for human evolution. And to believe that such Mystery-truths are now being revealed because of some kind of hankering to go back to what was once alive in them, would be a foolish misunderstanding. It is for the sake of deepening self-recollection, self-knowledge, that mankind to-day must be made aware



of the content of such Mysteries. For what linked the Northern Mysteries with the whole evolution of the universe, arose from the earth, just as the Gnostic wisdom, inspired from the cosmos, was connected with happenings in the far distances of the universe. How the *secret of man*, linked as it is with all the secrets of the cosmos, comes into operation when a human being enters physical existence on the earth — it was this that, with greater depth than anywhere else at a certain period of earth-evolution, lay at the root of these ancient Northern Mysteries.

But we have to go very far back — to about three thousand years before Christ, perhaps even earlier — to understand what was alive in the hearts of those in whom, later on, the feeling for Jesus arose. Somewhere in the region of the peninsula of Jutland, in present-day Denmark, was the centre from which, in those ancient times, important impulses went out from the Mysteries. And — let the modern intellect judge of this as it will — these impulses were connected with the fact that in the third millennium before Christ, in certain Northern tribes, he alone was regarded as a worthy citizen of the earth who was born in certain weeks of the winter season. The reason for this was that from those places of the Mysteries on the peninsula of Jutland, among the tribes which at that time called themselves the Ingaevones, or were so called by the Romans — by Tacitus ([Note 2](#)) — the Temple Priest gave the sign for sexual union to take place at a definite time during the first quarter of the year. Any sexual union outside the period ordained by this Mystery-centre was taboo; and in this tribe of the Ingaevones a man who was not born in the period of the darkest nights, at the time of greatest cold, towards our New Year, was regarded as an inferior being. For the impulse went out from that Mystery-centre at the time of the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Only then, among those who might believe themselves united with the spiritual world as became the dignity of man, was sexual union permissible. The characteristic virility — even in its aftermath — marvelled at by Tacitus, writing a century after the Mystery of Golgotha, was due to the fact that the forces which enter into such sexual union were preserved through the whole of the rest of the year.

And so those who belonged to the tribe of the Ingaevones (and in a lesser degree this was also true of the other Germanic tribes) experienced the process of conception with particular intensity at the time of the first full moon after the vernal equinox. They experienced it, not in wide-awake consciousness, but as it were heralded in dream. Yet they were aware of its significance in regard to the connection between the secret of man and the secrets of the heavens. A spiritual being appeared to the woman who was to conceive and in a kind of vision announced to her the human being who, through her, was to come to the earth. There was no clear consciousness, but only semi-consciousness, in the sphere experienced by souls when the entry of a human being into the physical world is taking place; subconsciously men knew that they were under the direction of the Gods, who then received the name of the *Wanen*, connected with *wähnen*, that is to say with what takes its course, not in clear, intellectual, waking consciousness, but in cognitive dream-consciousness.

What was once in existence and fitting for its own epoch, is often preserved in later times in symbols. Thus the fact that in those ancient times the holy mystery of the generation of a human being was wrapped in subconsciousness, and led to all births being concentrated in a particular period of the winter season, so that it was regarded as sinful for a man to be born at another time — this was preserved in fragments which passed over to a later consciousness as the Hertha or Erda or Nertus Saga. No erudition, as scholars themselves openly admit, has hitherto been able to interpret these fragments, for actually all that is known externally of the

Nertus Saga, with the exception of a few brief notes, comes from Tacitus, who writes as follows about the Nertus or Hertha cult:

"The Reudigni, Aviones, Anglii, Varini, Eudoses, Saurini and Nuitones — Germanic peoples living amidst rivers and woods" (that is, roughly the several tribes who belong to the Ingaevones) "specially revere *Nertus*, that is, *Mother Earth*, and they believe that she intervenes in human affairs, makes journeys to the peoples." (Germania 40). In the ancient cult of the Wanen it became known in dream-consciousness to every woman who was to give a citizen to the earth that the Goddess worshipped later on as Nertus would appear to her. The Divinity was, however, represented not exactly as female, but as male-female. It was not until later, through a corruption, that Nertus became an entirely feminine principle. Just as the Archangel Gabriel drew near to Mary, Nertus on her chariot drew near to the woman who was about to give a citizen to the earth. The woman concerned saw this in the spirit. Later, when the Mystery-impulse in this form had long since died out, echoes of the happening were celebrated in symbolic rites which Tacitus was still able to witness and of which he says the following: —

"On an island of the ocean is a sacred grove and in it there is a consecrated chariot covered with a veil. Only the priest may approach it." — This priest was taken to represent the 'Initiate' of the Hertha-Mystery — "He knows when the Goddess appears in the sacred chariot. He becomes aware of the presence of the Goddess in her holy place, and in deep reverence accompanies her chariot drawn by cows. Then there are days of joy and feasting in all the places which the Goddess honours with a visit. Then there are joyous days and wedding feasts. At those times no war is waged, no weapons are handled, the sword is sheathed. Only peace and quiet are at those times known or desired, until the Goddess, tired of her sojourn among mortals, is led back into her shrine by the same priest." (— This was actually the form taken by the vision —

"Then there are joyous days and wedding feasts." In such ancient records the descriptions are accurate and exact, only men do not understand them. "Then there are joyous days and wedding feasts. At those times no war is waged, no weapons are handled, the sword is sheathed." And so it was in very truth at the time which is now our Easter, when human beings believed in their inmost soul that the time of earthly fruitfulness had come for them too; it was then that the souls who were born at the time that is now our Christmas, were conceived. Easter was the time of conception. The experience was regarded as a holy, cosmic mystery, and it was this that was symbolised later on by the Nertus cult. The whole experience was veiled in the subconscious region of the soul, might not rise up into consciousness. This is hinted at in the description of the cult given by Tacitus: "Only peace and quiet are at those times known or desired — until the Goddess, tired of her sojourn among mortals, is led back into her shrine by the same priest. Then the chariot and the veil and even the Goddess herself are bathed in a hidden lake. Slaves perform the cult, slaves who are at once swallowed up as forfeit by the lake, so that all knowledge of these things sinks into the night of unconsciousness. A secret horror and a sacred darkness hold sway over a being who is able to behold only the sacrifice of death."

Everything that comes into the world calls forth a Luciferic and an Ahrimanic counterpart. The event which — as experienced by the Ingaevones — was part of the regular, ordained evolution of mankind was connected with the time of the first full moon after the vernal equinox. But owing to the precession of the equinox, what had remained from olden days as a dream-experience was transferred to a later date and therefore became Ahrimanic. When the experience that had arisen in ancient times in the true Hertha cult was advanced about four weeks, it became Ahrimanic. This

meant that the union of the woman with the spiritual world was sought in an irregular way — at the wrong time. Here lies the explanation of the institution of the *Walpurgis Night* — between the 30th April and the 1st May. It is nothing but an Ahrimanic transposition of time. Luciferic transposition of time goes backward; Ahrimanic transposition of time runs in the opposite direction, being connected with the precession of the equinox. Thus the Ahrimanic, Mephistophelean form of the Hertha cult, the perversion into the diabolic, later became the Walpurgis Night; it is connected with the most ancient Mysteries of which only faint echoes remained. Much of the content of the ancient Northern Mysteries lived on — if the matter is rightly understood — in the Scandinavian Mysteries. There, instead of Nertus, we find Friggo, a god who, according to the symbolism associated with him — but this can become intelligible only through spiritual science — turns into the very betrayer of what lies at the root of this Mystery.

One more thing must be mentioned in regard to these Mystery-practices. You can see that if the human seed was ripening from the time of the vernal full moon to winter time, *one* such human being would be the *first* to be born in the 'Holy Night.' Among the Ingaevones the first to be born in the Holy Night — the Holy Night of every third year in the most ancient times — was chosen as their leader when he reached the age of thirty, and he remained leader for three years, for three years only. What happened to him then I may perhaps be able to tell you on another occasion.

Careful investigation reveals that not only are Frigg, Frei, Freiga, merely additional designations for Nertus, as is the Scandinavian 'Nört,' but the name 'Ing' itself, whence Ingaevones, is another name for Nertus. Those who were connected with the Mystery called themselves "Men belonging to the God or the Goddess Ing" — Ingaevones. Only fragments of what really lived in this Mystery survived in the external world. One such fragment consists of the words of Tacitus already quoted. Another fragment is the well-known Anglo-Saxon rune of a few lines only. These famous lines are known to every philologist of the Germanic languages, but no one understands their meaning. They are approximately as follows:

"Ing was first seen among the East Danes. Later he went towards the East. He walked over the waves, followed by his chariot."

In this Anglo-Saxon rune there is an echo of what lay behind the old Mystery-customs of the Easter conception with a view to the Christmas birth. What happened then in the spiritual world was known best on the Danish peninsula. Hence the rune correctly says: "Ing was first seen among the East Danes."

Then came the time when this ancient knowledge fell more and more into corruption, when it was to be found only in echoes, in symbolism. This was the time in the evolution of humanity when what originated in the warm countries spread abroad. And what comes from the warm countries is something that is not connected — as is the case in the cold countries — with the intimate relation between the seasons and man's own inner experiences. From the warm countries came the impulse which resulted in the distribution of conceptions and births over the whole year; this of course had already happened in the South even in the days of the old, atavistic clairvoyance, although it was still to some extent pervaded by the old principles, the principles which prevailed in the times when in the cold regions the Women held sway and in the South the Temple Mysteries had long since superseded the old Nature-Mysteries. The Southern practice spread towards the North, although an intermixture of the old still remained at the time when the Wanen gods were superseded by the *Asen* gods. Just as the Wanen are connected with *wähnen*, so are the Asen connected with the German *sein* (being) — that is to say, being or existence in the material world which the mind tries to grasp externally. And when the men of the North had entered into



an age when individual intelligence began to assert itself, when the Asen had supplanted the Wanen, the old Mystery-customs fell into decay. They passed over into isolated, scattered Mystery-communities of the East. And one Being only — he in whom the whole meaning of the earth was to be made new, he in whom the Christ was to dwell — he alone was destined to unite within himself what had once been the essence and content of the Northern Mysteries.

Hence the origin of the account in St. Luke's Gospel of the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel to Mary, is to be sought in the visions of spiritual realities once reflected in the Nertus-symbol of the ancient Northern Mysteries. The symbol had moved eastward. Spiritual science discloses this to-day and this alone explains the meaning of the Anglo-Saxon rune. For *Nertus* and *Ing* are the same. Of *Ing* it is said: "Ing was first seen among the East Danes. Later he went towards the East. He walked over the waves, followed by his chariot," — over the waves of the clouds, that is, just as *Nertus* moved over the waves of the clouds.

What had once been general in the colder regions, here became *singular*, individual. It occurred as a single, unique event, and we find it again in the descriptions given in the Gospel of St. Luke.

But whatever has once existed in the world and has taken root, whatever is anchored in the heart's understanding, remains a possession of the soul. And when knowledge of Christianity was received in the North from the Roman South, men felt — not in clear consciousness but in the subconsciousness — it had some connection with an ancient Mystery-custom. Hence in the North, men were able to develop a particularly intense feeling for *Jesus*. The reality that had lived in the old *Nertus* Mystery had already sunk into the subconsciousness, yet in the subconsciousness it was present, it was sensed and dimly experienced.

When in those long past times in the far North, when the earth was still covered with forests that were the home of the bison and the elk, families came together in their snowcovered huts and under their lantern-lights gathered around the new-born child, they spoke of how with this new life there had been brought to them the new light announced by the heavens in the previous spring. Such was the ancient Christmas. To these people, who were one day to receive the tidings of Christendom, it was said: In the hour that is especially holy, one destined for greatness is born. It is the child who is the first to be born after midnight in the night designated as *holy*. And although men no longer possessed the ancient knowledge, when the tidings came that such a one had been born in far-off Asia, one in whom lived the Christ Who had come down from the world of the stars to the earth, something of the old feeling came alive in them.

It is incumbent upon the present age to understand such things more and more deeply and thereby grasp in concrete reality the meaning of the evolution of earthly humanity. Truths of mighty, awe-inspiring significance are contained in the Holy Scriptures, not just the trivialities of which we so often hear in religious teachings to-day, but sacred truths which thrill through the very fibres of our being, stirring our hearts to the depths. These are truths which flow through the whole evolution of humanity and resound in the Gospels. And as spiritual science reveals their deep, deep source, the Gospels will one day become a precious treasure, prized at their true worth. Men will know, then, why it is recounted in the Gospel of St. Luke:

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria).

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David).

To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for him in the inn."

It was for Him, the first-born among men in whose souls true ego-hood was to awaken, that the holy Mystery-power of ancient days had passed over from the Danish peninsula to the distant East.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid."

Nerta too, moving across the land, had announced to the old Wanen-consciousness, that is to say, in the subconsciousness of atavistic clairvoyance, the arrival of human beings on the earth.

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying ..."

And now the heavenly Powers proclaimed what the Nerta-Priest in the old Northern Mystery-cult had proclaimed to the woman about to conceive.

"The revelation of the Divine from the Heights takes place at the time when there is peace among men who are of good-will."

As Tacitus narrates: "Then there are joyous days and wedding feasts. At those times no war is waged, no weapons are handled, the sword is sheathed."

The great goal for which man must strive is the attainment of the power to gaze into the course of the evolution of humanity. For the Mystery of Golgotha, too, through which earth-evolution received its deeper meaning, will become fully comprehensible when its place in the whole evolution of humanity is understood. In future times, when, with the disappearance of materialism, man will know, not in abstract theory but as a concretely real experience, that he is of *divine* origin, the ancient, holy Mystery-truths will again be understood; then the intervening time will be over, a time in which the Christ, it is true, lives on earth, but can be understood only by the awakened consciousness. For the Gnostic conception of Christ faded away; understanding for Jesus developed in connection with the old Nertus cult, but in unconsciousness. In the future, however, humanity will have to bring both the unconscious streams to consciousness, and unite them. And then an ever greater understanding of the Christ will take foothold on earth, an understanding that will unite the Mystery-knowledge with a great and renewed Gnosis.

Those who take the anthroposophical view of the world seriously, and the movement associated with it, will see in what it has to say to mankind no child's play but great and earnest, soul-shaking truths. And our souls must submit to this because it is right that we should be shaken by greatness.

Not only is the earth a mighty living being; the earth is an exalted spirit-being. And just as the greatest human genius could not stand at the height he reaches in later

life if he had not first developed through childhood and adolescence, so the Mystery of Golgotha could not have taken place, the Divine would not have been able to unite with earth-evolution, if at the beginning of earthly days the Divine — in a different manner but in a manner still divine — had not descended to the earth. The form taken by the revelation of the Divine from the heavenly heights was not the same in the ancient Nertus cult as it was at a later time, but for all that it was a true revelation. The knowledge contained in this ancient wisdom was, it is true, atavistic in character, but for all that it was infinitely more exalted than the materialistic view of the world which, in the sphere of knowledge, so brutally reduces humanity to the level of the animal.

In Christianity we have to do with a *Fact*, not with a theory. The theory is a necessary consequence and of importance for the consciousness that has had to develop in the further course of human evolution. But the essence of Christianity as such, the Mystery of Golgotha, is an accomplished Fact. The impulse entered, to begin with, into subconscious currents, as was still possible in Asia Minor at the time when the union of Christ with the earth took place.

Shepherds, men bearing a similarity with those among whom the Nertus cult flourished, are also described in the Gospel of St. Luke. I can give only very brief indications of these things. If we were able to speak of them at greater length you would find that there are deep foundations for what I have told you to-day. The human being has descended from spiritual heights ... hence the revelation of the Divine from the heavenly heights ... The revelation had to be expressed in this form to those who out of the ancient wisdom knew the destiny of man to be united with the secrets of the stars of heaven. But what must live on earth as the result of Christ's union with a man of earth — that can be understood only very gradually. The message is twofold: 'Revelation of the Divine from the heights' — 'Peace in the souls on earth who are of good-will.' Without this second part, Christmas, the Festival of the birth of *Christ*, has no meaning!

Not only was Christ *born* for men; men have also crucified Him. Even behind this lies necessity. But it is none the less true that men have crucified the Christ! And it may dawn upon us that the crucifixion on the wooden Cross on Golgotha was not the only crucifixion. A time must come when the second part of the Christmas proclamation becomes reality: 'Peace to the men on earth who are of good-will.' For the negative side too is discernible. Men are very far indeed from a true understanding of Christ and of the Mystery of Golgotha.

Does it not cut to the very heart that we ourselves should be living at a time when men's longing for peace is shouted down? ([Note 3](#)) It seems almost a mockery to celebrate Christmas in days when voices are raised in outcry against the desire for peace. To-day, when the worst has not actually befallen, we can but fervently hope that a change will take place in the souls of men, and a Christian feeling, a will for peace supersede these demonstrations against the desire for it. Otherwise it may not be those who are struggling in Europe to-day, but those coming over from Asia, who will one day wreak vengeance on this rejection of the desire for peace; it may be they who will have to preach Christianity and the Mystery of Golgotha to humanity on the ruins of European spiritual life. And then the indelible record will remain: that at Christmas time, nineteen hundred and sixteen years after the tidings of peace on earth to men of good-will, humanity came to shout down the desire for peace.

May it not succeed! May the good Spirits who are at work in the Christmas impulses protect luckless European humanity from such a fate!



## Calendar of Events Advent and Christmas 2018

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday/Saturday<br>Nov. 30/Dec. 1st | Pine Hill Holiday Fair. Friday evening adult shopping begins 6:30pm. Saturday Fair from 10am to 4pm. Fun for the entire family!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Saturday, Dec. 1 <sup>st</sup>      | Monadnock Waldorf School Winter Crafts Fair 10am to 3pm at the Grade School campus.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Sunday, Dec. 9 <sup>th</sup>        | High Mowing Nativity: 3:30pm performance geared towards younger children and 8pm performance, held in silence/quiet reverence. Arrive early to get a seat.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Sunday, Dec. 16 <sup>th</sup>       | Gospel Readings with figurine display. 4pm in the Garden Room, Groh Farm. We will read the first chapters of the Luke Gospel and then the Matthew Gospel, lighting a candle in front of a scene with small figures depicting what is being read. Both Gospels end with the description of the Baptism in the Jordan. This is a quiet event, wonderful for children. |
| Friday, Dec. 21 <sup>st</sup>       | Oberufer Shepherd's Play 1:30pm in the Pine Hill Auditorium. Public seating in the balcony only, please.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

**If you have a Holy Nights event that you would like to share, please email [groh.alice@gmail.com](mailto:groh.alice@gmail.com) and I will send it out to my email list.**

This year's Christmas Revels at the Sanders Theatre, Harvard in Cambridge, MA is centered on scenes from the Finnish epic the Kalevala. Ticket information:  
[https://www.boxoffice.harvard.edu/Online/default.asp?BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::permalink=revels&BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::context\\_id=](https://www.boxoffice.harvard.edu/Online/default.asp?BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::permalink=revels&BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::context_id=)

Here is a link to a lecture by Rudolf Steiner about the Kalevala:  
<https://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19141109p01.html>

