

Anthroposophical Society in New Hampshire

Christmas Newsletter

2025



Black Madonna of Czestochowa

To whom we may bring our trials and sorrows

Soul Calendar verse for Christmas

I feel as from enchantment freed
The Spirit-child in womb of soul;
The Holy Word of Worlds
It has in heart's bright radiance
The heavenly fruit of hope begotten,
Which grows jubilant to farthest worlds,
Out of my being's godly ground.

The Search for the New Isis, Divine Sophia

GA 202

23 December 1920, Dornach

I. A Christmas Lecture

Christianity commemorates in three yearly festivals that Being Who, for the Christian, gives earth-life its meaning, and from Whom the strongest force of this earth-life radiates.

Of these three festivals Christmas makes the greatest demand on our *feeling*, and seeks as it were to make this feeling inward. The Easter festival makes its chief demand on what we call *human understanding*, human comprehension; and Whitsuntide on what is termed *human will*.

Basically we only grasp what is contained in the Christmas Mystery through inwardising and deepening of that feeling which makes present to us our entire human being, our worth and dignity as man. Only when we can feel in the right way and with sufficient inwardness what man is in the whole cosmos, are we able rightly to appreciate the mood of Christmas. Only when we can attain to the full understanding of that wonder which is contained in the Easter Mystery—the wonder of the resurrection—shall we rightly value the Easter Mystery; and only when we perceive something in the festival of Whitsuntide which helps to develop our will-impulse, do we perceive in the right light what Whitsuntide should be.

Christ Jesus is related to the Father principle of the world, and this is represented for us by the Christmas festival. Christ Jesus is related to what we call the Son principle, and this is represented by the Easter Mystery; while the relation of Christ to that which undulates and weaves through the world as spirit is made present to us in the Whitsuntide Mystery.

We see nature around us, and we see also that man enters into his physical existence through the forces of this same nature. We know through our study of Spiritual Science that we do not rightly regard nature if we only pay attention to its external physical features. We know that divine forces permeate it and we only become aware of our origin from nature in the true sense of the word when we perceive this divine element that weaves and works within it. In this we perceive the Father principle of nature. All that permeates nature as the divine is the Father principle in the sense of the old religions and also in the sense of a rightly understood Christianity—whether it be the flowers of the field that we observe, and how they grow, or the roll of the thunder and the flash of the lightning; or whether we watch the sun in its path across the heavens or gaze upon the shining stars; or whether again we listen to the brooks and the streams rushing along—when we become aware of what is revealed so mysteriously in this external revelation of nature as the origin of all 'becoming,' then we are at the same time aware of what places us as men within this world through the mystery of physical birth.

But just in this mystery of physical birth there always remains something inexplicable as regards the nature of man as long as we do not bring it into connection with what may be inwardly experienced in the commemoration of the Christmas Mystery—in commemoration of the childhood which entered into humanity with the Jesus boys.

What does the presence of these Jesus boys say to us? It tells us nothing less than that in order to be fully human it does not suffice merely to be born, that is, merely to be here in the world through those forces which, as the forces of physical birth, bring all beings including man into existence. This holy Christmas Mystery tells us, as we look at the childhood of Christ, that the true human being in us cannot merely be born, but that in the innermost part of the soul it must be born anew; that man must in the course of his life experience something within his soul which alone makes him fully man. And what he should experience can only come to pass when it is brought into connection with that childhood which entered into earth evolution at Christmas time.

As we look upon this Jesus-child we must say to ourselves: "Only through the fact that this Being came down amongst men in the course of human evolution does it first become possible for man to be truly man in the full sense of the word, that is, to connect what he receives through birth with what he can experience above and beyond him as a result of a feeling of devoted love towards that Being Who descended from spiritual heights that He might, through great sacrifice, unite Himself with human existence."

For many men of the early Christian centuries it was a great experience to gaze on the entrance of the Christ Being into earth evolution. It made evident to them, as it were, man's two-fold origin—his physical and his spiritual origin. It is a birth through which Jesus passes—it is to a little earth-born child the Christian looks when he thinks of Jesus in the world's Holy Night. Yet he says to himself: "What is born here is something different from the rest of mankind, it is a Being through whom the rest of humanity can receive what they cannot receive through physical birth." Our feeling is deepened when we understand in the right sense and with the right love what is signified in the words: "We must be born twice; the first time through the forces of nature, the second time reborn through the forces of Christ Jesus."

This is our communion with Christ Jesus; it is this which through Christ Jesus first gives us the full consciousness of our human worth and human character. If we are able, or have the desire, to form a judgment as to the course of development in the centuries, then we must ask the question: "Has this feeling about the birth of Christ Jesus always maintained this depth?" As we look around the world, my dear friends, we cannot say that the same inwardness of feeling concerning the Christmas Mystery is experienced today as it was experienced even five or six centuries ago in Europe.

Think of the Christmas tree—how beautiful it is, and in what a graceful way it appeals to the heart. But the Christmas tree is not something ancient, it is scarcely two centuries old—it

became naturalised comparatively quickly within the countries of Europe, but it is only in recent times that it has adorned the Christmas festival. What does it actually represent? I might say it represents the beautiful, lovable, more sympathetic side of that which in another way, a way which is less sympathetic and less fair, appears before the soul in modern human development. We may seek ever so deeply to discover the impulses out of which the Christmas tree has originated in what are really quite modern times, and we shall find mysterious and secret feelings out of which the Christmas tree has come, but these secret feelings all tend in the direction of seeing the Christmas tree as a symbol for the *Tree of Paradise*. What does this signify? It signifies that the feelings which people once experienced as they directed their gaze to the crib and the mystery of the birth of Christ Jesus at the beginning of our era are no longer there, such feelings have become more and more strange to us. It means that for modern humanity, this being born again within the soul has in a sense been lost and modern humanity desires to look back from the Christmas tree that displays the Cross to the origin of earth humanity which knows nothing as yet of the Christ, to the natural starting point of human existence—from Christ back to Paradise, from the festival of Christmas day on the 25th to the festival of Adam and Eve on the 24th day of December. This has become something beautiful, since humanity's origin in Paradise is also beautiful, but it is a diversion from the real birth-mystery of Christ Jesus. This regard for the Christmas tree has preserved all depth and inwardness of feeling and it comforts those who are men of good will as they look at the Christmas tree out of the inwardness of the human heart; it comforts them concerning that other aspect which in modern times has led men away from the Christ mystery to the primal natural forces of birth in human evolution.

Christ Jesus appeared amongst a people who worshipped Jahve or Jehovah, that Jehovah-God who is connected with all that is natural existence, who lives in thunder and lightning, in the motion of the clouds and stars, in the springs and rushing streams, in the growth of plants, animals and men. Jahve is that God who can never, if man is connected with Him alone, give man his completeness, for He gives man the consciousness of his natural birth, with an intermixture of course of a spiritual element which is not merely natural; but He does not give man the consciousness of his rebirth which he must attain through something which cannot be given him by means of natural physical forces. So we see how modern humanity is led away and diverted from Christ Jesus for Whom there is no distinction of class, nation or race, but for Whom there is only a single humanity. We see how the thoughts and feelings of modern humanity have been led aside to that which has already been overcome by the birth of Jesus Christ; to that which lies at the basis of man's origin through the forces of nature and which is connected with the differentiation of men into classes, nations and races. And if it was the *one* Jehovah that the Jews worshipped when Christ came, then the modern nations have returned to *many* Jehovahs. For what is worshipped today—even if it is no longer described by the ancient name—the powers to which men do worship when they divide themselves up into nations and make war on each other as nations—they are Jehovahs. We see the nations

fighting each other in bloody wars—each at certain moments calling upon the name of Christ—in reality, however, it is not Christ on Whom the nations call, but only Jehovah, not the one Jehovah but a Jehovah. The people have simply returned to him and have forgotten how great a step forward was taken when the Jehovah principle gave place to the Christ principle.

In a beautiful way does the Christmas tree lead us back to man's origin; in an ugly and hateful way does the national Jehovah principle lead us back. In reality that which is only a Jehovah, through an unconscious lie, is often addressed as Christ, and the name of Christ is thus misused. Terribly is the name of Christ misused at the present time, and we shall not acquire the real depth of feeling that is necessary today in order rightly to experience the Christian mystery again unless we see clearly that the way to this feeling concerning Christ Jesus must be *sought*. We need a new understanding of what has been traditionally handed down about the birth of Christ Jesus.

It was to two kinds of people, my dear friends, who were nevertheless representatives of our ONE humanity, that Christ Jesus was announced at the Christmas festival. First he was announced to the poor uneducated shepherds of the field who had absorbed nothing of culture but were quite simple men both in intellect and heart. And then it was also announced to the wise men from the East, that is, from the land of wisdom. To them it was announced through the highest summit of their wisdom, through their ability to read the stars. Thus Jesus Christ was announced to the simple shepherd hearts and the highest wisdom of the three Magi from the East. And most deeply significant is this double contrasted announcement of Christ Jesus. On the one side to the simple shepherds, and on the other side to the wisest of the world.

And how was Christ Jesus announced to the simple shepherds of the field? With the soul's eye they saw the light of the Angel. Their clairvoyance and clairsaidence were awakened. They heard the deepest words which for them signified the future meaning of earth life: "*The Divine is revealed in the heights and there shall be peace among men on earth who can be of good will.*" Out of the depths of the soul arose the capacity by which in the Holy Night the poor simple shepherds without any kind of wisdom experienced feelingly what was being revealed to the world; out of the perfection of that wisdom that could reach even to the Mystery of Golgotha, out of the finest observation of the course of the stars this revelation came to the wise men of the East, to the Magi, the same revelation. In the one case it is read within the human heart, the heart of the poor simple shepherd, and it penetrates to the deepest point within the human heart; it is there that they became clairvoyant and the heart reveals to them by its clairvoyant power the coming of the Saviour of mankind. The others looked up to the breadths of heaven, they knew the mystery of the widths of space and the evolution of time; they had attained a wisdom by which they could experience and solve the mysteries of space and time. The Christmas Mystery was revealed to them. Our attention is directed to the fact that what lives in man's innermost soul and what lives in the widths of space flow from the same source. And both, in the way they had been developed up to the

Mystery of Golgotha, were already in a declining condition. The clairvoyance that emerged from the quickened human heart, that of the shepherds, to whom we are told the announcement came, was still strong enough to perceive the voice that proclaimed: "*The Divine is revealed in the heights, in heaven, and peace shall be on earth among men of good will.*" We might say that the last remnants of this clairvoyance through *inner piety* were still present in the shepherds whose karma, or destiny, had brought them together to that place where Christ was born. And from that primeval *holy wisdom* which first flourished in the post-atlantean times among the original Indians, then especially among the Persians, and again was transplanted among the Chaldeans, and of which at all events the last remnants were present among those whom we find as the three Magi from the East, out of this primeval holy wisdom which comprehended the world of space and time—out of this wisdom, through its representatives who had raised themselves to the highest point, was the Christmas Mystery again revealed.

For us, however, in the 5th culture epoch, both ways are in decline. For humanity in general, that which led to clairvoyance in the poor shepherds, as well as that which led the Magi from the East to the penetration of the mysteries of space and time is no longer livingly active. We must find the *human being*, the man who depends on himself. As men we must pass through the being forsaken by God in order—in this forsakenness and loneliness—to find freedom. But we must find our way back to a union with that which on the one side was the highest wisdom of the Magi of the East, and on the other side was announced to the shepherds through a deepened insight of the heart.

All forces, my dear friends, develop further. What has become of that which the Magi of the East understood through the development of their intellect which was still clairvoyant? What has become of their astrology? Their kind of astronomy? We cannot understand human evolution if we do not look into such things. Today it has become cold and gray mathematics and geometry. Today we see the abstract forms that are taught in schools as geometry and mathematics. This is the last remnant of that which in the living radiance of the cosmic light was mastered by that ancient wisdom which led the three Magi of the East to Christ. The outer wisdom has become the inner theories of space and time. And whilst the Magi of the East, through their understanding of the mysteries of space, were able in vision to reckon "*In this night will the Saviour be born,*" our astronomy, which is the successor to that astrology, can only reckon the future eclipses of the sun and moon and similar things. And whilst the poor shepherds of the field out of the inwardness of their hearts were raised to that which certainly stood in close relationship to them, namely, the vision of the Christmas Mystery, and the hearing of the heavenly announcement, there has only remained to present-day humanity the perception of external nature. This perception of external nature through the senses represents the last transformation of the simplicity of the shepherds, just as our reckoning of future eclipses of sun and moon is the last successor of the wisdom of the Magi.

The shepherds of the field were equipped with something. They were equipped with depth of heart, with deep feeling whereby, through clairvoyance, they came to the vision of the Christmas Mystery. Our contemporaries are equipped with the telescope and microscope. But no telescope or microscope will lead to the solution of man's deepest riddle as did the hearts of the poor shepherds. No foresight through calculation of sun and moon eclipses and so on will lead man to comprehend the necessary course of the world as did the star-wisdom of the Magi of the East. How all human differences flow together into a single human feeling when we realize that what the shepherds of the field, without wisdom, experienced through the piety of their hearts is the same as what stimulated the Magi of the East as the highest wisdom! In a wonderful way both facts are placed side by side in the Christian tradition.

We have practically lost both ways by which an understanding of the birth of Christ revealed itself to man. We have gone back, from the crib and the Holy Night, to the tree of paradise. We have gone back from a Christ Who belongs to the whole of humanity to the national gods which are just so many Jehovahs and no Christ For just as truly as that which reveals itself in the deepest nature of man is something common to all men, so truly is that which is revealed through all the widths of space and the mysteries of time, something common to all men.

My dear friends, there is something in the depths of man's heart that speaks of nothing else than of what is purely human and dissolves all differences. And it is just within these depths that we find the Christ And there is a wisdom which extends far beyond all that can be discovered concerning single spheres of world existence, a wisdom that is able to grasp the world in its unity, even in space and time. And this again is the star-wisdom that leads to Christ We need to have again in a new form that which led on the one hand the shepherds of the field, and on the other hand the Magi of the East to find the way to Christ In other words we need to deepen our external perception of nature through what the heart can develop as spiritual perception of nature. We must learn once again out of the piety of the human heart to approach all that to which in modern times the microscope, telescope, roentgen-rays apparatus and such instruments are applied. Then will the growing plant, the rushing stream, the murmuring spring, the lightning and thunder from the clouds, not merely speak to us in an indifferent way. There will speak to us from the flowers of the field, from the lightning and thunder of the clouds, from the shining stars and the radiant sun, there will, as it were, stream into our eyes and into our hearts, as the result of all our observation of nature, words that proclaim nothing else than this: "The divine is revealed in the heights of heaven, and peace shall be among men upon earth who are of good will." The time must come when our observation of nature sets itself free from the dry, prosaic, non-human method pursued in the laboratories and clinics of today. The time must come when our observation of nature must be irradiated by such life so that the life which can no longer exist in the way it did for the shepherds of Bethlehem will nevertheless be able to speak to us through the voices of the plants and animals, from stars and springs and rivers. For the whole of nature

utters what was uttered by the Angel: "The Divine is revealed in the heavenly heights and there can be peace among men on Earth who desire to be of good will"

What the Magi possessed through an outer observation of the stars we need to obtain by an awakening of our inner life. Just as we must, once more, listen outwards into nature and hear the Angels singing as it were from external nature, so must we be able through Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition to bring forth an astronomy, a solution of the world riddle, out of the inner nature of man. It must be a spirituality, a Spiritual Science created out of the inner being of man. We must find that which is really man's true nature. And the real nature of man must speak to us of the world's 'becoming' through the mysteries of Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan. We must feel the arising of a whole Cosmos within us. All that man can experience as insight into the deepest mysteries of the world has been reversed since the Mystery of Golgotha.

There is an ancient way of presenting the spheres of heaven, which was already known to the Persian Magi. They looked up towards the heavens and saw with their physical eyes the constellation of the Zodiac which is called the Virgin (Virgo), and by means of spiritual vision they projected into the constellation of the Virgin that which physically is only perceptible in the constellation of the Twins (Gemini). This wisdom has been preserved. It is by this wisdom that man can perceive, can experience, the consonance between the constellation of the Virgin and the constellation standing at right angles to it, in quadrature, the Twins. This was represented in such a way that in place of the constellation of Virgo, the Virgin was depicted not only with the ear of corn, but also with the child. But this child in fact represents the Twins. It is the representative of the two Jesus children. This was an astrological conception especially at the time of the ancient Persians.

Then came a different time, the time of the Egypto-Chaldean development. Then it was the constellation of the Lion that was looked up to in the same way that the Persians regarded the constellation of the Virgin. But now, in quadrature to the Lion stood the Bull, and there arose the Mithras religion, the worship of the Bull, because into the constellation of the Lion was projected that of the Bull.

Then came the time when Cancer, the Crab, played the same role in the Greco-Latin period as the Virgin among the Persians, and the constellation of the Ram was seen in quadrature standing, as it were, within the constellation of the Crab. After that came the reversal. After that matters took a different path. Up to the Greco-Latin time, until the Mystery of Golgotha, astronomy was something that could be attained as external science, and human understanding was of such a nature that in gazing out into space and the mysteries of the star-world, the secrets of space and time were discovered; also in experiencing the human inner life through the piety of the heart, a vision of the inner mysteries was possible. In the Greco-Latin time these relations were reversed. That which formerly could be experienced inwardly had ever more and more to be experienced by beholding outer nature.

My dear friends, with respect to nature's revelation we must be as pious as the shepherds were in their hearts. Just as they came to spiritual vision in their inner world, we must come to a spiritual vision in nature. And on the other side we must find the way of Cancer the Crab; we must come to an astronomy inwardly, so that by the inner powers of vision we may awaken the course of the world that leads through the Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan periods. *An astronomy from within* where formerly there was an external astronomy—a *piety in the observation of nature* where formerly there was the kind of piety possessed by the shepherds of the field. If we can deepen what today is so unspiritual in our observation of nature, if on the other side we can render creative what today is so prosaically experienced in mere mathematical and geometrical pictures, if we can raise mathematics again through inner experience to that glory which the ancient astronomy had, if we can deepen our observation of nature to that heart's depth and piety which the shepherds of the field had, if we can inwardly experience what the Magi experienced from the stars, if in directing our gaze to outer nature we can be as pious as were the shepherds of the field, then, through piety in outer observation of nature and through a loving pursuit of world-events with our hearts, we shall again find the way to the Christmas Mystery just as the shepherds of the field through inner piety and the Magi from the East through an outer wisdom found their way to the crib.

The way must be found again to the Christmas Mystery. We must become as pious with regard to nature as the shepherds were in their hearts; we must in our inward vision become as wise as were the Magi in their observation of planets and stars in space. We must develop inwardly what the Magi developed outwardly. We must in our intercourse with the outer world develop what the simple shepherds of the field developed in their hearts; then we shall find the way, the right way, to a deepened experience of Christ, to a loving comprehension of Christ; and then we shall find the way to the Christmas Mystery. Then we shall be able with right thoughts and with right feelings to place the crib beside the original tree of paradise which does not only speak to us of how man enters the world through nature-forces but of how he can only become conscious of his full humanity by re-birth.

Anyone speaking of the Christmas Mystery today must make a demand upon mankind that reaches into the future. We live in serious times and we must see clearly that we need again to *become man* in the true sense. We have not yet attained to the inwardness of the Magi wisdom nor to the piety which from the shepherds flowed into the outer world. The social question that confronts humanity is terribly urgent. Fearful things have come about in recent years and the social problem becomes ever more and more threatening; only those who are asleep in their souls can overlook this fact Europe as regards its culture, threatens to become a heap of ruins. Nothing can raise it from its chaotic condition unless men find it possible once again to develop a true, a real humanity in their common life. They will not be able to do this unless their feeling is deepened and made inward by an observation of nature in which they are as pious as the shepherds of the field when through their inner forces they received the

Angel's revelation of God above and peace on earth beneath. Only with these forces can the social life be mastered. This will happen when the secrets of space and time are so understood inwardly that men comprehend the nature of the world-spirit as a unity just as the one sun is beheld by the Chinese and by the Americans and by the Middle European. It would be absurd if the Chinese demanded a sun for themselves, the Russians another sun, the Middle European another, the French another, and the English yet another. Just as the sun is a unity, so is the Sun-Being that bears humanity a unity. If we look out into the widths of space we find there the challenge to a unification of humanity. The spiritual that lies open to our view without does not speak of the differentiation of humanity or of discord; neither does what speaks in the inmost depths of our being. To the shepherds of the field, the voice they were able to hear by the power of their hearts announced that the Godhead was revealed in the widths of the world spaces and that by receiving the divine within one's own soul peace can be among men of good will. This must again be proclaimed to modern humanity from the whole circumference of nature. To the Magi from the East, the secrets of the stars told that here on earth Christ Jesus is born. This must be proclaimed to modern humanity from out of what can begin to be revealed in the deep places of the human heart.

My dear friends, we need a new path. Once again the voice sounds to us: "Change your hearts and minds, look in a new way on the course of the world." When we look rightly on the course of the world and consider the way of the humanity to which we ourselves belong, then we discover the path to that Mystery which could be revealed to the shepherds as well as to the cultured sages, and that will be revealed to our hearts and in our external beholding of the world. When we have sufficiently deepened our inner and outer perception of the world, when we are able to do this and find the *inner* Magi-wisdom that leads us just as the outer Magi-wisdom led the sages of the East, as well as the *outer* wisdom that leads us to that piety by which the shepherds of the field were also led, then we shall be able again with the right inner feeling to perceive what lies in this mystery, namely, that for all without distinction—as formerly He appeared among men, put away as it were from humanity, turned out in the solitude—for all, there is born that which thereafter became the Christ.

We must find again the Jesus Christmas Mystery, and we must find it by cultivating all that within ourselves of which we have spoken today. We must find the Christmas light within ourselves as the shepherds did the Angel's light in the field; and as the Magi of the East, so must we find the star through the power of that which is true Spiritual Science. Then will be opened for us the only way to the content of the Christmas Mystery. We shall recognise it again and it will remind us of humanity's rebirth.

Yes, my dear friends, it is for this we must work—that the Christmas Mystery be born again among men. Then we shall rightly understand the mystery of the rebirth of the human being. This is what has been communicated to us in a singular manner. For in a gospel that is not recognised by the Church it is related that the Jesus-child spoke to His Mother immediately

after His birth in definite words. We certainly approach the Child in the crib today in the true way when we rightly hear the words which He wishes to speak to us: "Awaken the Christmas light within you, and the Christmas light will then also appear to you and to your fellow-men with you in the world outside."

If we look into the deepest inner secrets of man, there too we find the same demand.

The Four Seasons and the Archangels

[GA 229](#) 6 October, 1923 Dornach

II. The Christmas Imagination

Yesterday there stood before us the picture of Michael battling with the Dragon, as shown to us through an inner understanding of the course of the year. And art can really be nothing else than a reflection of what human beings feel in relation to the universe. Of course this is possible at various levels and from various standpoints; but on the whole we can speak of a work of art only when it expresses human feeling in such a way that through it the soul is opened to the secrets of the universe.

To-day, in the same spirit that led us to the culminating picture of Michael and the Dragon, we will carry further our study of the seasons of the year.

We know from yesterday's lecture that when autumn draws on, a kind of in-breathing by the Earth, a spiritual in-breathing, occurs, and the elemental beings are drawn back into the bosom of the Earth. Those who went out in the height of summer and turned back at Michaelmas are drawn further and further in, until in the depths of winter they are united most intimately with the Earth.

Now we must realise that in winter the Earth is above all self-contained, enclosed in itself. It has drawn back everything of a spiritual nature which it had allowed to stream out from itself during the summer. Hence in the depths of winter the Earth is more earthly, more truly itself, than at any other time. And while for our further studies we must keep firmly in view this winter character of the Earth, we must of course not forget that when winter prevails over half the Earth, the other half is experiencing summer. This is a fact we must keep in the background of our minds. But just now we are concerned with the coming of winter to one part of the Earth. It is then that the Earth unfolds its own nature in the deepest sense; the nature that makes it truly Earth.

Let us now look at this Earth of ours. It has a solid core, hidden below its visible outer surface, which in turn is largely covered by water, the hydrosphere. The continents are only floating, as it were, in this great watery expanse. And we can picture the hydrosphere as extending up into the atmosphere, for the atmosphere is always permeated by a watery element. Certainly this is much thinner than the water of the sea and the river, but there is no definite boundary in the atmosphere where the watery element comes to an end. Hence if we are to show schematically what the Earth is like in this respect we shall have, first, a solid core in the centre. Around it we have the watery regions (blue). I must of course indicate the jutting up of the continents: they will have to be exaggerated, for they should really be no more prominent than the irregularities on the skin of an orange. Then I must put in the hydrosphere, this watery part of the atmosphere all round the Earth. Let us look at this picture (blue) and ask ourselves what it really represents? It is not something made up out of itself: it is water shaped by the whole cosmos. The reason why this body of air and water is spherical is because the cosmos extends round it as a sphere on all sides. And this means that strong forces play in on the Earth as a whole.

The effect is that if we were to look at the Earth from some other planet, it would appear to us as a great water-drop in the cosmos. There would be all sorts of prominences on it—the continents, which would be rather differently coloured—but as a whole it would appear to us as a great water-drop in the midst of the universe.

Let us now consider this from a cosmic standpoint. What is this great water-drop? It is something which takes its shape from its whole cosmic environment.

If one approaches the matter from a spiritual-scientific point of view, bringing Imagination and Inspiration to bear on it, one comes to know what this water-drop really is. It is nothing other than a gigantic drop of quicksilver; but the quicksilver is present in an extraordinarily rarefied condition.

The possibility of these high attenuations has been shown by the work of Frau Dr. Kolisko. At our Biological Institute in Stuttgart the attempt has been made to put this on an exact footing. It has been possible to make dilutions of substances up to one part in a trillion, and in fact to establish precisely the effects which such high dilutions of particular substances can have. Hitherto, in homoeopathy, this has been merely a matter of belief; now it has been raised to the level of exact science. The graphs which have been drawn leave no doubt to-day that the effects of the smallest particles follow a rhythmical course. I will not go into details; the work has been published and these findings can now be verified. Here I wish to point out only that even in the earthly realm the effects of enormous dilutions must be reckoned with.

Here we are concerned with something of which we can say, when we use it on a small scale—this is water. We can draw water from a river or a well and use it as water. Yes, it is water, but there is no water that consists solely of hydrogen and oxygen. It would be absurd for anyone to suppose that water consists of hydrogen and oxygen only. In the case of mineral waters and such-like, it is of course obvious that something else is present. But there is no water composed solely of hydrogen

and oxygen: that is only a first approximation. All water, wherever it appears, is permeated with something else. Essentially, the whole water-mass of the Earth is quicksilver for the universe. Only the small quantities we use are water for us. For the universe, this water is not water, but quicksilver.

Hence we can say, first of all, that in so far as we are considering the hydrosphere in relation to water, we have to do with a drop of quicksilver in the cosmos. Embedded as it were in this drop of quicksilver, naturally, are metallic substances—in brief, all the earthly substances. They represent the solid mass of the Earth, and they tend to assume their own special forms. Thus in the structure as a whole we observe [the general spherical form of quick]silver. Ordinary metallic quicksilver, one might say, is only the symbol produced by nature for the general activity of quicksilver, leading quite definitely to a spherical form. Embedded in the whole sphere are the metallic crystals, with the manifold variety of their own distinctive forms. Hence we have before us this formation of warmth, water, air: its tendency, as I have said, is to assume a spherical form, with individual crystal forms within it.

Even if we single out the air (dark red) which surrounds the Earth as its atmosphere, we can never speak simply of air, for the air always has a tendency to contain warmth in some degree: the air is permeated with warmth (violet). Thus we must add this fourth element, warmth, which enters into the air.

Now this warmth, which comes into the air from above, carries pre-eminently within it the sulphur-process, imparted to it from the cosmos. And to the sulphur-process is added the mercurial process, as I have described it in connection with the hydrosphere. Thus we have air-warmth—the sulphur-process; water-air—the mercurial process.

If now we turn towards the inner part of the Earth, we come to the acid-formation process, and especially to the salt-process, for the salts derive from the acids; and this is what the Earth really wants to be. Hence, when we look up into the cosmos, we are really looking at the sulphur-process. When we consider the tendency of the Earth to form itself into a cosmic water-drop, we are really looking at the mercurial process. And if we turn our gaze to the solid earth underfoot, which in spring gives rise to all that we see as growing, sprouting life, we are looking at the salt-process.

This salt-process is all-important for springtime life and growth. For the roots of plants, in forming themselves out of the seeds, depend for their whole growth on their relation to the salt-formations in the soil. It is these salt-formations—in the widest sense of the term—which give substance to the roots and enable them to act as the earthly foundation of plant-life.

Thus in turning back to the Earth we encounter the salt-process. This is what the Earth makes of itself in the depths of winter, whereas in summer there is much more intermingling. For in summer the air is shot through with sulphurising processes, which indeed occur also in lightning and thunder; they penetrate far down, so that the whole course of the season is sulphurised. Then we come at Michaelmas to the time when the sulphur-process is driven back by meteoric iron, as I told you

yesterday. During summer, too, the salt-process mingles with the atmosphere, for the growing plants carry the salts up through their leaves and blossoms right up into the seeds. Naturally, we find the salts widely distributed in the plant; they etherealise themselves in the etheric oils and so on; they approach the sulphurising process. The salts are carried up through the plants; they stream out and become part of the being of the atmosphere.

In high summer, accordingly, we have a mingling of the mercurial element, always present in the Earth, with the sulphurising and salt-forming elements. If at this season we stand here on Earth, our head actually projects into a mixture of sulphur, mercury and salt; while the arrival of deep winter means that each of these three principles reverts to its own inner condition. The salts withdraw into the inwardness of the Earth, and the tendency for the hydrosphere to assume a spherical shape reasserts itself—imaged in winter by the snow-mantle that covers parts of the Earth. The sulphur process withdraws, so that there is no particular occasion to observe it. In place of it, something else comes to the fore during the deep winter season.

The plants have developed from spring until autumn, finally concentrating themselves in their seeds. What is this seeding process? When plants run to seed, they are doing what we are constantly doing in a dull human way when we use plants for food. We cook them. Now the development of a plant to blossom and then to seed-production is nature's cookery; it approaches the sulphur-process. The plants grow up into the sulphur-process. They are most strongly sulphurised, so to speak, when summer is at its height. When autumn draws on, this combustion process comes to an end.

In the organic realm, of course, everything is different from the processes we observe in their coarse inorganic form; but the outcome of every combustion process is ash. And in addition to the salt-formation, which comes from quite another quarter and is needed within the Earth, we must add all that falls down on to the Earth from the blossoming and seeding of plants as a result of the cooking or combustion process. This falling down of ash—just as ash falls down in our stoves—plays a great role which is usually overlooked. For in the course of seed-formation—which is fundamentally a combustion process—the seed-nature is continually showering down on the Earth, so that from October onwards the Earth is quite impregnated with this form of ash.

If therefore we observe the Earth in the depths of winter, we have first the internal tendency to salt-formation; besides this we have the mercurial shaping-process in its most strongly marked form; and while in high summer we have to pay attention to the sulphurising process in the cosmos outside the Earth, we now have in winter the ash-forming process.

So, you see, the tendency which reaches its culmination at Christmas is prepared in advance from Michaelmas onwards. The Earth is gradually more and more consolidated, so that in deep winter it becomes really a cosmic body, expressing itself in mercurial formation, salt-formation, ash-formation. What does this signify for the cosmos?

Now, if we can suppose that a flea, let us say, were to become an anatomist and were to study a bone, it would have before it an exceptionally small piece of bone, because the flea itself is so small

and it would be examining the bone from a flea's perspective. The flea would then discover that in the bone we have to do with phosphoric lime in an amorphous condition, with carbonic acid, lime and so forth. But our flea anatomist would never come to the point of realising that the fragment of bone is a small part only of a complete skeleton. Certainly, the flea jumps, but in studying the tiny piece of bone he would never get beyond it. Similarly, it would not help a human geologist or mineralogist to be able to jump about like a gigantic earth-flea. In studying the mountain ranges of the Earth, which in their totality represent a skeleton, he would still be working on a miniature scale. The flea would never come to describing the skeleton as a whole; he would hack out a tiny piece with his little hammer. Suppose this were a tiny piece of collar-bone; nothing in the constituents of the little piece, carbonate of lime, phosphate of lime and so on, would reveal to the flea that it belonged to a collar-bone, still less that it was part of a complete skeleton. The flea would have hacked off a tiny piece and would then describe it from his own flea-standpoint, just as a man describes the Earth when somewhere—let us say in the Dornach hills—he has hacked out a bit of Jura limestone. Then he describes this bit, and works up his findings into mineralogy, geology, and so on. It is still the same flea-standpoint, though certainly somewhat enlarged.

This, of course, is no way to arrive at the truth. We need to recognise that the Earth is a single whole, most firmly consolidated during winter through its salt-formation, its mercurial formation and its ash-formation. Let us then ask what the whole nature of the Earth signifies when we look at it not from the flea's point of view, but in relation to the cosmos.

We will first consider salt-formation, taking this in the widest sense to connote a physical deposit, exemplified in the way ordinary cooking-salt dissolved in a glass of water will separate out as a deposit on the bottom of the glass. (I will not now go into the chemical side of this, though the result would be the same if I did). Now a salt-deposit of this kind has the characteristic of being porous, as it were, to the spiritual. Where there is a salt-deposit, the spiritual has a clear field of entry. In mid-winter, accordingly, when the Earth consolidates itself on the basis of salt-formation, the effect is, first of all, that the elemental beings who are united with the Earth have, one might say, an agreeable abode within it. But other spiritual elements, too, are drawn in from the cosmos and are able to dwell in the salt-crust which lies immediately below the Earth's surface. Here, in this salt-crust, the Moon-forces are particularly active—I mean the remains of those Moon-forces which were left behind, as I have often mentioned, when the Moon separated from the Earth.

These Moon-forces are active in the Earth chiefly because of the salt present in it. So in winter—beneath the snow cover which strives in one direction, one might say, towards the quicksilver form and in the other passes down into the salt deposits—we have the solid earth-substance, the salt, permeated with spirituality. In winter the Earth does indeed become spiritual in itself, through the consolidating influence, especially, of its salt-content.

Now water—that is, cosmic quicksilver—has the inner tendency to shape itself spherically. We can see this inner tendency everywhere. And because of this the Earth in mid-winter is enabled not only to become rigid through its salt-content and to permeate the salt with spirit, but also to vivify the

spiritualised substance and to lead it over into the realm of life. In winter the whole surface of the Earth is reinvigorated. The quicksilver principle, working into the spiritualised salt, activates everywhere this tendency towards new life. Below the Earth's surface, in winter, there is a tremendous reinforcement of the Earth's capacity to produce life.

This life, however, would become a Moon-life, for it is chiefly the Moon-forces that are active in it. But because ash falls down from the seeds of plants, so that everything I have just described is impregnated with ash, something is present which keeps the whole process in the domain of the Earth.

The plants have striven upwards into the sulphur-process, and out of this process the ash has fallen down. This is what draws the plant back to Earth, after it has striven up into the etheric-spiritual. So in the depths of winter we have on the Earth's surface not only the tendency to absorb the spirit and to reinvigorate itself, but the tendency also to transform the Moon-like into the earthly. Through the remains of the fallen ash the Moon is compelled to promote Earthly life, not Moon life.

Now let us turn from the Earth's surface and look at the air-formation that surrounds the Earth. For the air, it is of the utmost importance always, but especially in midwinter, that the Sun radiates warmth and light through it—though the light is less relevant to our immediate considerations.

You see, science treats things always in isolation from one another, as in reality they never are. Air, we are told, consists of oxygen and nitrogen and other elements. But in fact this is not so: the air is not made up merely of oxygen and nitrogen, for it is always rayed through by the Sun. That is the reality: air is always permeated in the daytime by the activity of the Sun. And what does this activity signify? It signifies that the air up above is always seeking to tear itself away from the Earth. If salt-formation, mercurial formation and ash-formation were alone active, then nothing but the earthly would be there. But up above, because the activities striving upwards from the Earth are taken up into the activity of Sun and air, Earth-activity is transmuted into cosmic activity. The power to work on its own accord in the living-spiritual is taken away from the Earth. The Sun makes its power felt in everything that grows and sprouts upwards from the Earth. And so, in a certain region above the Earth, a quite special tendency is apparent to spiritual vision. On the Earth itself everything seeks to become spherical (dark red); in this upper region the sphere is continually impelled to flatten out into a plane (reddish). Naturally it will tend to resume its spherical shape, but up there the spherical is always inclined to flatten itself out. The upper influences would really like to break up the Earth, to disintegrate it, so that everything might become a flat surface, spread out there in the cosmos.

If this were to come about, the Earth's activities would disappear completely, and up above we should have a kind of air in which the stars would be active. This is very plainly expressed in man himself. What part do we as human beings have in the sun-filled air above? We breathe it in, and because of this the activity of the Sun extends right into us, downwards certainly in a sense, but chiefly upwards. Through our head we are continually drawn away from the influences of the Earth,

and on this account our head is enabled to participate in the whole cosmos. Our head would really always like to go out into the region where the plane prevails. If our head belonged only to the Earth, especially in winter-time, our whole experience of thinking would be different. We should then have the feeling that all our thoughts wished to take a rounded shape. In fact they do not; they have a certain lightness, adaptability, fluidity, and this we owe to the characteristic incursion of the activity of the Sun.

Here we have the second tendency; here the Sun-like strikes into the Earthly. But this is at its weakest in winter. If we were to go still further out, something else would come into the picture. Then we should have to do no longer with the activity of the Sun, but only with the activity of the stars, for the stars in turn have a great influence on our head. Inasmuch as the Sun gives us back to the cosmos, so to speak, the stars have their own deeply penetrating influence on our head, and so on the whole formation of the human organism.

But now I must tell you that what I have just been describing no longer holds good to-day, for in a certain way man has emancipated himself, in his growth and his whole evolution, from the Earth's activities. If we were to go back to the old Lemurian time, or especially to the Polarian time that preceded it, we should find the whole thing quite different. We should observe that everything that occurred on the Earth had a great influence on the human organism. You will indeed have gathered this from the account of the evolution of the Earth given in my *Occult Science*. In those early times we should find man placed in the very midst of the activities I have been telling you about. To-morrow I will describe how man has emancipated himself from all this; to-day I will speak as though we were still fully involved in it. And here we come to something that to present-day understanding will seem highly paradoxical.

We can ask the question: What does a mother become when she is beginning to develop a new human being? Originally—after all that has first to happen in order that a new human being may come into existence on Earth—it is the salt-forming Moon-forces which chiefly influence the female organism at that time. So we can say that while a woman is otherwise and in general a human being, the salt-forming Moon-forces then have the strongest influence on her. We can put this in spiritual-scientific terms by saying: The woman becomes Moon, just as the Earth—especially just below its surface—becomes Moon when Christmas approaches.

So it is not the Earth only which becomes mostly Moon when deep winter prevails; this tendency of the Earth to become Moon occurs again, in like manner, when a woman prepares herself to receive a new human being. And precisely because of this, the Sun-influence on her becomes different, just as it is different in mid-winter, compared with high summer. And the formation in the woman of the new human being stands wholly under the influence of the Sun. Because the woman takes up the Moon-activities, the salt-activities, so strongly into herself, she becomes able to take up the Sun-activities on their own account. In ordinary life the Sun-activities are taken up by the human organism through the heart and from there spread out over the whole organism. But directly a woman prepares herself to bring forth a new human being, the Sun-activities are concentrated on

the forming of this new life. Thus we can say schematically: The woman becomes Moon so that she can take up the Sun-activities into herself; and the new human being, existing first as an embryo, is in this sense wholly Sun-activity. The embryo is enabled to come into being through this concentration of Sun-activities.

The old instinctive clairvoyance knew this in its own way. At one time in old Europe a remarkable idea prevailed. It was thought that before a new-born child had taken any earthly nourishment, it was a quite different being from what it became after imbibing its first drop of milk. That was the old Germanic belief. For these people had an instinctive feeling that the new-born infant was a Sun-being, and that through the first earthly nourishment it received it became a creature of Earth. Hence the new-born infant did not at first belong to the Earth at all. Again, according to occult laws which I might touch on at some other time, old Germanic custom gave the father—at whose feet the child was always laid directly it was born—the right either to let it grow up or to destroy it; for it was not yet a creature of Earth. If it had taken one single drop of milk, he no longer had the right to destroy it. It would then have to remain an Earth-creature, because it had been ordained by nature, by the world, by the cosmos, to be one. In such old customs there lives something of immensely profound significance.

Here indeed is the basis of the saying: The child is of the Sun. So it is possible now to look on the woman who has borne the child as a being who is in the deepest sense related to all earthly processes. For the Earth prepares itself in mid-winter through the salt-tendency—that is, the Moon tendency—so that it may be best able to receive the Sun-element. The Earth then reaches out beyond the Sun-element to the heavens, to which also the human head belongs.

Hence we can say something like this. In order to bring the essence of Christmas rightly before our souls, let us transpose ourselves into the being of man. In the Christmas spirit is expressed the coming to birth of the Jesus-child, who is ordained to receive the Christ into himself. Let us look closely at this. If we look at the figure of Mary, we are bound to see that her head reflects something heavenly in its whole appearance, its whole expression. We must then indicate that Mary is preparing to take into herself the Sun, the child, the Sun as it rays through the encircling air. And then we can see in the form of Mary the Moon-Earthly element.

Now imagine how this could be portrayed. First we have the Moon-Earth element, spread out below the Earth's surface. Then, going out into the great spaces, we find a raying forth from man into the cosmos, and this could be shown as a heavenly Earth-star radiance, sent out by the Earth into the cosmos. The head of Mary is like a radiant star, which means that her whole countenance and bearing must give expression to this star-radiant quality.

If then we turn to the breast, we come to the breathing process; to the Sun-element, the child, forming itself out of the clouds in the atmosphere, shot through by the rays of the Sun.

Further down we come to the Moon-like, salt-forming forces, given outward expression by bringing the limbs into dynamic relation with the Earth and letting them arise out of the salt and the Moon-elements in the Earth. Here we have the Earth in so far as it is inwardly transfigured by the Moon.

All this would really have to be shown through a kind of rainbow colouring. For if we were to look from the cosmos towards the Earth, through the shining of the stars, it would be as though the Earth were wishing to shine inwardly, beneath its surface, in rainbow colours. On the Earth we have something related to the Earth-forces, to gravity and to the formation of the limbs, which can be expressed only through the garment which follows the Earth-forces in its folds. So we should have the garment down below, in relation to the Earth-forces. Then we should have to portray, a little higher up, that which gives expression to the Earth-Moon element. We could even picture the Moon, if we wished to symbolise; but the Moon-element is clearly expressed in the configuration of the Earth.

Higher up still, we must bring in that which comes forth from the Moon-element. We see how the clouds are permeated with many human heads, pressing downwards; one of them is condensed into the Sun resting on Mary's arm: the Jesus-child. And all this must be completed, in an upward direction, through the star-radiance expressed in the countenance of Mary.

If we understand the depths of winter, how it shows us the connection of the cosmos with man, with man who takes up the birth-forces in the Earth, the only possible way of presenting the woman is in this form: formed out of the clouds, endowed with the forces of the Earth: with the Moon-forces below, with the Sun-forces in the middle, and above, towards the head, with the forces of the stars. The picture of Mary with the little Jesus-child arises out of the cosmos itself.

If we understand the cosmos in autumn, so as to represent all its formative forces in a picture, we come by necessity to an artistic portrayal of Michael and the Dragon, as I indicated yesterday. In the same way, everything we feel at Christmas-time flows together into the picture of Mary and the child—that picture which hovered so often before painters in earlier times, especially in the first Christian centuries, and of which the last echoes have been preserved in Raphael's Sistine Madonna.

The Sistine Madonna was born out of the great instinctive knowledge of nature and the spirit which prevailed in ancient times. For it is a picture of the Imagination which must in fact come to a man who transposes his inner vision into the secrets of Christmas in such a way that they become for him a living picture.

Hence we can say: The course of the seasons must come to expression for inner vision in clear and glorious Imaginations. If one goes out with one's whole being into the world, the approach of autumn becomes the glorious Imagination of Michael's fight with the Dragon. Just as the Dragon can be represented only in a sulphurous form—born out of the sulphur-clouds—and just as the sword of Michael emerges when we think of the meteoric iron as concentrated in the sword and blended with it, so out of all that we can feel at Christmas time, arises the picture of Mary the

mother, the folds of her robe following the forces of the Earth, while in the region of the breast—even these details are apparent in the painting—her garment has to be inwardly rounded, taking on the quicksilver form, so that here one has a feeling of inward enclosure. Here the Sun-forces can find entry, and the innocent Jesus-child, who must be thought of as having yet received no earthly nourishment, is the Sun-activity resting on Mary's arm, with the radiance of the stars above. That is how we have to represent the head and eyes of Mary, as though a light were shining out from within them towards men. And the Jesus-child in Mary's arm must appear as though emerging from the rounded cloud-shapes, tender and lovable, inwardly sheltered; and then the garment, subject to earthly gravity, expressing what the force of earthly gravity can become.

All this is best rendered in colours. Then we have the picture which comes to shine out for us as a cosmic Imagination at Christmas-time—a picture we can live with until Easter, when out of cosmic relationships once again an Easter Imagination can arise; we will speak of it tomorrow.

You will see from this that art is drawn from the heavens and their interplay with the Earth. True art is an expression of that which man experiences in the cosmos, spiritual-psychical-physical, which reveals itself to him in magnificent Imaginations. So, in order to represent all that is involved in the inner struggle for the development of self-consciousness out of nature-consciousness, nothing will do but the grand picture of Michael's fight with the Dragon; and in order to bring before us everything that can work from nature into our souls during the deep winter season, we have an artistic, imaginative expression of it in the picture of the Mother and child.

To observe the course of the seasons is to follow the great cosmic artist, so that the things which the heavens imprint on the Earth are brought to life again in powerful pictures—pictures which grow into realities for the mind of man.

Thus the course of the year can reveal itself to us in four Imaginations: the Michael Imagination, the Mary Imagination and—as we shall see later on—the Easter Imagination and the St. John Imagination.



Calendar of Events

Friday/Saturday, December 5 and 6 Pine Hill Holiday Fair Friday evening 6:30-9:30pm adults only shopping, Saturday 10am to 3pm everyone welcome! Crafts, music, food and children's activities.

Saturday, December 13. 2 performances: 3pm and 5pm High Mowing
Nativity in the Big Room, High Mowing campus.

Monday, December 15 Single performance of the Plowshare Farm Shepherd's Play. 7pm in the Union Congregational Church, 33 Concord St. Peterborough, NH

Friday, December 19, 1:30pm The Shepherd's Play in the Pine Hill Auditorium. The public should please try to sit in the balcony.

Sunday, December 21, 4pm. Gospel Readings with doll display in the Garden Room Groh Farm. A family event. We will read the birth stories from the Luke and Matthew Gospels and light a candle in front of each scene as it is described. No explanations or commentary, just the Gospel stories themselves. Snacks for the children will follow.

Saturday, January 3, 4pm Glen Williamson will give a performance of *The Incarnation of the Logos*, the story of the two Jesus children.
In the Garden Room, Groh Farm. All welcome!
(the Gospel doll display will still be available for viewing.)