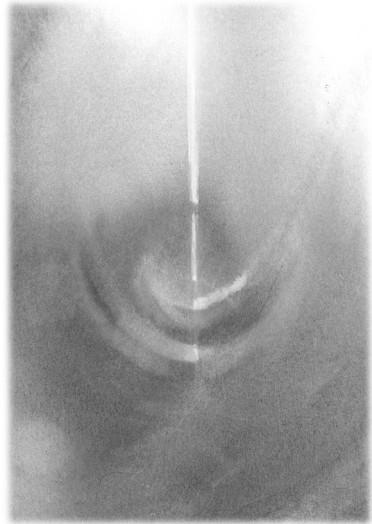
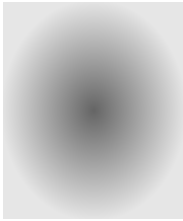


3 THE LITTLE SERIES

Christmas



From the work of Rudolf Steiner
Compiled by Helmut von Kügelgen



CHRISTMAS

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SUSAN HOWARD, Editor

LYDIA ROBERSON, Managing Editor

How to Work with This Booklet

The Four Different Accounts of Christmas in the Gospels

Dear Educators,

The material contained in this booklet is primarily meant to deepen our work as grownups with children. It does not focus on traditional ways we celebrate in midwinter, but aims to help us in our search to penetrate the festival of Christmas as such. The festival of birth and of incarnation contains within it all riddles and secrets pertaining to human growth and development on earth. What a relevant topic for us today: to ponder how the heavens open, how from God this being descends into earthly matter and takes on human form in a physical body! The days which commemorate the birth of Jesus (December 25) and Epiphany, when Christ appears (January 6), enclose the twelve Holy Nights. This is the time of year which demands that we be awake in our hearts and look ahead towards what we are going to do in the future, giving us the unique opportunity to let the light of Christmas shine more and more into the life of the whole year.

In order to bring the different pictures of the gospels to life once again, we should bring to our minds the fact that there are four different accounts of Christmas. Everyone will be able to see that only celebrating the happy and blissful mood of the shepherds is one-sided and will not do in our time, considering all the fear, murder, hunger and war there is in our world. In the gospel of St. Luke there is nothing which dims the glow of candles reflected in children's eyes, the magic of angels hovering over meadow and stable, the astonishment and reverence about the voices from on high and the little child lying on straw in the manger. After eight days, the parents go to the temple in Jerusalem so that little boy can be circumcised; after that they go home to Nazareth. Up to his twelfth year, as Luke tells us, the yearly visits to the temple are repeated at Easter. Nothing dims the Christmas mood surrounding this pure child.

Something happens with the child at age 12 which is not described. At age 30, he goes to John in order to be baptized. The gospel talks about Jesus "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph." It says that the heavens once again opened as they had done during the holy night and that the voice of God resounded, saying "thou art my beloved son..." Thereupon, the holy being descended, a winged being in the form of a dove. After that, Joseph's genealogy is recounted, going back to Nathan the priest, the son of David, and from David back to "Adam, which was the son of

God." It is as if our gaze is lifted once again back to the Father God, out of whom humanity is — "Ex Deo Nascimur": out of God we are born.

By itself, the mood of the Luke gospel in the Christmas night cannot be the whole of Christmas. Therefore we have, in addition, the account given in the gospel of St. Matthew. The genealogy at the beginning of Matthew builds up only the history of the Jewish people for our inner eye, going from Abraham via Salomon, the other kingly son of David, up to Joseph. Therefore, the combined Bible for the Catholic and Evangelical churches has a footnote for the genealogy in the gospel of St. Luke, which says: "There is as yet no satisfactory explanation for the differences in the names given by the two evangelists." Many a theologian and church Father has given explanations from their point of view, and Steiner has put forth his explanation on the basis of his own research. Nobody can be expected to think that one or the other explanation is "satisfactory." It may be that this riddle, together with the Pauline word, "Not I, but Christ in me," can lead one to a different understanding of birth, incarnation, and reincarnation. For many, it will have to be the voice of Jesus Christ telling them what He told Nicodemus at night, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? " Meaning: nothing concerning "being reborn out of the spirit." "Unless one is born anew, one cannot behold the kingdom of God." (John 3, 1-13).

The account of the Christmas story we find in the gospel of St. Matthew is entirely different from the one in St. Luke. In the former account, there is mistrust and doubt which starts before the birth. The angels in the gospel of St. Matthew only speak to the men: to Joseph, to the Kings; nothing is revealed to Mary. There is that one festive occasion: the adoration by the Magi which is experienced and portrayed as an event honoring them as three representatives of humanity, embodying their different cultures and races, also taking their age into account. The child, sitting in the lap of a Madonna crowned like a queen, receives their adoration as if he already comprehends the significance of the moment.

But that very night the Kings flee and go their different ways, in order to avoid Herod. Mary and Joseph likewise take flight — to Egypt! Mary has to flee immediately after she has given birth to the child. They leave behind murder and horror, and the spreading of a most fearful terror, because the blood of innocent

young children is being shed. Years go by before Herod has died and the angel calls Joseph to return and shows him Nazareth as the place he has to settle in. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son'." (Matthew 2, 15-16).

The day of the adoration of the Magi is also the day of the baptism in the Jordan, the day in which the Christ appeared. This is the point at which the gospel of St. Mark starts. The baptism, during which Jesus of Nazareth receives the Revelation of the Son of God, is depicted in all four gospels. It is after this event that the three years of the working of Christ on earth begins. Up to the middle of the fourth century, this festival of the appearance of the Christ was celebrated on January 6 as the "Festival of the Birth of Christ." It wasn't until the year 353, in Rome, that Christmas was moved to the day of the birth of the son of man, as portrayed in the gospel of St. Luke which speaks so much to the heart.

The most elevated "Christmas story" is to be found in the prologue to the gospel of John. Here lies the origin of the glorious words "Et incarnatus est", which can be read in golden letters above so many altars of Christendom. They signify "and he has become flesh." The Logos, the creative word of the world, which has been working in all creation, in whom is change, the light of life and everything that is growing and becoming: it is the Christ, who has become flesh, lived among us, whose teaching we have heard and can always hear, because He is with us until the end of time, as is said later in the Bible. When one takes in His being, His light, His life, and His word, one receives the strength to experience oneself as a child of God and as being born not from the hereditary bloodstream, but from God. Isn't this what was told to Mary, the virgin? "Not from the will of the flesh," but from God comes the being, for whom you prepare the temple of the body, the vessel of the son of man, in order that the son of God, who was in the lap of the world father, can appear within it. The appearance of Christ, the Messiah, at the moment in which the thirty-year-old Jesus of Nazareth goes to be baptized by John, follows therefore in the account of John the evangelist.

It is worth the effort to return time and again to the Gospel itself and the riddles and mysteries which not only speak of the particular birth or appearance of Jesus Christ, but also of the wonder of each individual natural conception, creation and

birth of an human being. Christmas is the festival of love, because it speaks of the miracle of conception and birth of an individual human being, of incarnation and destiny, of spirit, soul and body. And only love can bring all these about.

The table of contents gives an overview of the material which can serve to deepen our experience of Christmas. With more in-depth understanding as a basis we should carefully approach traditional ways of celebrating, taking into account what the children are used to in their particular environment. When we build up the cradle at which the shepherds worship to celebrate in the fashion of the gospel of St. Luke for the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of December, and follow this after Christmas with the cradle of St. Matthew at which the Kings will worship on the sixth of January, and then let the Kings and the holy family travel on, we are following faithfully in the footsteps of medieval painters with this sequence of pictures. Where do the Kings go? They lead into the everyday life of the ensuing year and show us how to live our lives. Let us not forget their offerings and the loving devotion of the shepherds during the "life of the whole year."

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

LUKE 2, 14.

Helmut von Kügelgen

Universal Verse for the Earth

◆ By Rudolf Steiner

Translated by Jan Kees Saltet

The Divine manifests

In worldwide realms on high,

And peace will spring on earth

Among people united by good will. ❖

◆ From *THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN*, Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1973, p.66.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was a God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through It and save through It was not anything made that was made.

In It was Life and Life was the Light of Men.

And the Light shone in the darkness but the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man; he was sent from God, bearing the name John.

The same came as a witness in order to bear witness of the Light that through him all might believe.

He was not the light but was a witness of the Light.

For the true Light which lighteth every man should come into the world.

It was in the world and the world came into being through It, but the world knew it not.

It entered into individual men (that is, the ego-men); but individual men (the ego-men) received it not.

But they who received it could reveal themselves as Children of God.

They who trusted in His name were not born of the blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man — but of God.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we have heard His teaching, the teaching of the once-born Son of the Father filled with Devotion and Truth.

John bare witness of Him and proclaimed clearly: "He it was of whom I said, 'He Will come after me, who was before me.' For He is my forerunner."

For out of His fullness have we received Grace upon Grace.

For the law was given through Moses, but Grace and Truth came through Jesus-Christ.

Hitherto hath no one beheld God with his eyes. The once-born Son, who was in the bosom of the Universal-Father, has become the leader in this beholding ❖

The Christmas Conference 1923/1924

for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society

◆ From *The Christmas Conference for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society 1923/1924*, Anthroposophic Press, 1990, pp. 289-297.
Translation by Arvia MacKaye Ege.

*At the turn of time
Cosmic-Spirit-Light descended
Into earthly stream of being;
Darkling night
Had run its course;
Day-clear light
Streamed within human souls;
Light
That enwarms
The humble shepherds' hearts;
Light
That enlightens
The wise heads of kings.*

*God-given light,
Christus-Sun,
Enwarm
For us our hearts,
Enlighten
For us our heads,
That good may be
What we
From our hearts do found,
What we
From our heads
Direct with single will. ❖*

◆ From *TRUTHWROUGHT WORDS AND OTHER VERSES*, translation by Arvia Mackaye Ege, Anthroposophic Press, 1979, p.26 ("Weihnacht").

Christmas

*The soul's clear eye reflects
The light of cosmic hope,
And spirit-devout wisdom
Speaks in human hearts;
The Father's eternal love
Sends forth His Son to earth,
Who sheds, with grace, upon man's path
The healing light of heaven.*

*Glory to God in the heights;
Peace and stillness through earthly spaces;
Blessedness in mankind.*

◆ Also from *TRUTHWROUGHT WORDS AND OTHER VERSES*, p.28 ("Wintersonnenwende").

Christmas

*Behold the sun
At midnight hour,
And build with stones
In lifeless ground.
So find in downfall
And in death's dark night
Creation's new beginning,
The morning's youthful might.
The heights of heaven reveal
The gods' eternal Word;
The deeps shall guard and keep
Its gift of peace assured.
In darkness living
Create an inner sun.
In substance weaving
The spirit's joy is won. ❖*

8 *Verses from The Calendar of the Soul*

◆ From *CALENDAR OF THE SOUL*, translated by Ruth and Hans Pusch, Anthroposophic Press, 1982.

Thirty-fourth Week (November 24-30)

*In secret inwardly to feel
How all that I've preserved of old
Is quickened by new-risen sense of self:
This shall, awakening, pour forth cosmic forces
Into the outer actions of my life
And, in becoming, mould me into true existence.*

Thirty-fifth Week (December 1-7)

*Can I know what it is "to be"
So that true life can find itself
Again in soul's creative urge?
I feel that I am granted power
To make my Self, as humble part,
At home within the cosmic Self.*

Thirty-sixth Week (December 8-14)

*Within my being's depths there speaks -
Intent on revelation -
The cosmic Word mysteriously:
Imbue your labor's aims
With my bright spirit light
To sacrifice yourself through me.*

Thirty-seventh Week (December 15-21) ◇ 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.*

Thirty-ninth Week (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.*

Fortieth Week (January 5-11)

*And when I live in spirit depths
And dwell within my soul's foundations,
There streams from love-worlds of the heart,
To fill the vain delusion of my Self,
The fiery power of the cosmic Word.*

Forty-first Week (January 12-18)

*The soul's creative might
Strives outward from the heart's own core
To kindle and inflame god-given powers
In human life to right activity;
The soul thus shapes itself
In human loving and in human working.*

*Forty-second Week (January 19-25)**In this the shrouding gloom of winter**The soul feels ardently impelled**To manifest its innate strength,**To guide it into darkneses,**Anticipating thus**Through warmth of heart the sense-world's revelation. ❖*

The Etheric Body as a Reflection of the Universe

◆ Translation in Anthroposophic Newssheet no. 41/42, Oct. 6, 1940: p.324,
given in Elberfeld, June 13, 1915.

*O cosmic spirit, let us be completely filled with the spirit that grows
out of spiritual science, so that we may not fail to wrest from
Ahriman and Lucifer that which can be of help to the earth, for its
salvation and its progress! ❖*

◆ "Thoughts on Christmas Eve" ("The Birth of Earth Light out of the Darkness of Christmas") in *FESTIVALS OF THE SEASONS*, Anthroposophical Publishing Co., London/Anthroposophic Press, NY 1928, pgs.72-83, given in Berlin, December 24, 1912.

It is beautiful that circumstances permit us to unite here on this evening at this festival. For though the vast majority of our friends are able to celebrate the festival of love and peace in the circle of those with whom they are united by the ties of ordinary life, there are many among our anthroposophical friends who, in a certain sense, are alone today. It is also true, that those of us who are not drawn into this or that circle of ordinary life are, considering the spiritual current in which we stand, far from being excluded from taking part in the festival of love and peace. What could be more beautifully suited to unite us here, in the spiritual atmosphere of love and peace that radiates through our hearts, than an anthroposophical movement? And we may also regard it as a happy chance of fate, that it is in this year that we are able to be together Christmas Eve and to follow out a little train of thought which can bring this festival near to our hearts. For in this year we ourselves stand before the birth of that which, if we rightly understand it, must lie very close to our hearts: I mean the birth of our Anthroposophical Society.

If we have lived the great ideal which we want to express through the Anthroposophical Society, and if we are accordingly inclined to dedicate our forces to this great ideal of humankind, then we can naturally let our thoughts sweep on from this our spiritual light — or means of light— to the dawn of the great light of human evolution which is celebrated on this night of love and peace. On this night — spiritually, or in our souls — we really have before us that which may be called the birth of the earthly light, of the light that is to be born out of the darkness of the night of initiation. This light will become a radiance for human hearts and human souls, and for all that they need in order to find their way upwards to those spiritual heights that are to be attained through the earth's mission.

What is it really that we should write in our hearts? What is the feeling that we may possess on this Christmas night? On this Christmas night, the fundamental human feeling of love — the fundamental feeling that says: compared with all other forces and powers and treasures of the world, the treasures and the power and the force of love are the greatest, the most intense, and the most powerful.

This is what should pour into and be written on our hearts. The feeling that wisdom is a great thing, but that love is still greater; that might is a great thing, but that love is still greater, should pour into our hearts and our souls. And this feeling of the power and force and strength of love should pour into our hearts so strongly that, beginning on this Christmas night, something may overflow into all our feelings during the rest of the year. May it be possible for the days and the hours of the year to pass in such a way that we need not be ashamed of them in the light of the feeling that we would pour into our souls on Christmas night! If so, then we shall be feeling — together with all those beings who have wanted to bring the significance of Christmas, of the night of initiation, near to humankind — the significance and the relation of Christmas night to the whole Christ-impulse within earthly evolution.

For this Christ-impulse stands before us, we may say, in a threefold figure. Today, at the Christ-festival, this threefold figure of the Christ-impulse can have great significance for us. The first figure meets us when we turn our gaze to the gospel according to St. Matthew. The being whose birth we celebrate on this Christmas Eve enters human evolution in such a way that three leaders of humankind, three representatives of high magic come to pay homage to the kingly being who is entering human evolution. They are kings in the spiritual sense of the word; magic kings come to pay homage to the great spiritual king who appears in the high form that He has attained. For the high being, Zarathustra, passed through human stages of development in order to reach the height of the spiritual king whom the magic kings came to welcome. And so does the spirit-king of St. Matthew's gospel confront our spiritual gaze. He brings into human evolution an infinite fount of goodness and an infinite fount of mighty love, of that goodness and that love before which human wickedness feels itself challenged to do battle. We see enmity against the spirit-king manifest in the figure of Herod; and we see that the spiritual king must flee before the enemy of spiritual kingship. So do we also see in the spirit His majestic and magic glory. The marvelous image of the spirit-king, of Zarathustra reincarnate, arises before our souls. He has passed from incarnation to incarnation on the physical plane, and in him wisdom has reached perfection. We see him surrounded by the three magic spirit-kings themselves, by three leaders of human evolution.

In yet another figure, the Christ-impulse comes before our souls as it appears in the gospels according to St. Mark and St. John. There, we seem to be led towards the cosmic Christ-impulse, which expresses how humanity is eternally related to the great cosmic forces. We have this connection with the great cosmic forces when, through an understanding of the cosmic Christ, we become aware how, through the mystery of Golgotha, a cosmic impulse entered into earthly evolution itself. This cosmic impulse enters as something yet infinitely more great and mighty than the spirit-king whom we see surrounded by the magicians. We see before us the mighty cosmic being who will take hold of the bodily vehicle of that man who is himself the spirit-king, the flower and summit of earthly evolution. It is really only the short-sightedness of present day humankind which prevents them from feeling the full greatness and power of this occurrence in human evolution, wherein Zarathustra became the bearer of the cosmic Christ-spirit. It is only this short-sightedness, which does not feel the whole significance of that which was being prepared in the moment of human evolution which we celebrate in our night of initiation, in our Christmas. Everywhere, if we enter a little more deeply into an understanding of human evolution, we are shown how the Christ-Event penetrated into the whole of earthly evolution. Let us feel this as we follow, in this evening, a relevant line of thought in which something may stream out into the rest of our anthroposophical thought, deepening, and penetrating into the meaning of things.

Many things might be brought forward for this purpose. It could be shown how, in times which were still nearer to an experience of the spiritual worlds, an entirely new spirit appeared before humankind — new in comparison with the spirit that held sway and was active in earthly evolution in pre-Christian times. For instance, a literary figure was created, a figure, which lived during the early Christian centuries, and expressed to us how a soul of that time was affected when, having first felt itself quite immersed in the old pagan spiritual knowledge, then approached the Christ-Impulse simply and without prejudice, and felt a great change in itself. Today, we have more and more of a feeling for such a figure as Faust. We feel this figure which Goethe, a more modern poet has, so to speak, reawakened. We feel how this figure is meant to express the highest human striving, yet at the same time the possibility of the deepest human guilt. It may be said, apart from all the artistic value given to this figure by the power of a modern poet, we can feel deep and significant aspects of what lived in those early Christian

souls, when, for example, we sink into the poem of the Greek empress, Eudocia. She created a revival of the old legend of Cyprian, which pictures a man who lived wholly in the world of the old heathen gods and became entwined in it; a man who, after the mystery of Golgotha, was still completely given up to the old heathen mysteries, forces and powers. The scene in which Cyprian makes the acquaintance of Justina, who is already touched by the Christ-Impulse, and who is given up to those powers that are revealed through Christianity, is beautiful. Cyprian is tempted to draw her from the path, and for this purpose, to make use of the old heathen magical methods. All this is also played out between Faust and Gretchen in the atmosphere of battle between old pagan impulses and the Christ-Impulse. Apart from the spiritual side of it, it works out magnificently in the old story of the Cyprian and the temptation to which he was exposed in relation to the Christian, Justina. And even though Eudocia's poetry may not be very good, we still see the awful collision of the old pre-Christian world with the Christian world. In Cyprian we see a man who feels himself far from the Christian faith, quite given up to the old pagan divine forces. There is a certain power in this description. Today we only bring forward a few extracts, showing how Cyprian feels towards the magic forces of pre-Christian spiritual powers. Thus, in Eudocia's poem, we hear him speak the "Confession of Cyprian."

*Ye faithful ones in Christ, who in your hearts
Do cherish, true and warm, our Savior great in praise:
Behold my tears outpouring and then listen
While I relate the fountain of my grief.
And ye, who still are lost in dark illusion,
Bound to idol images,
Pay heed, ye too, to that
Which I shall tell of their deceit and falsehood.
For never lived a man, who to false Gods,
Was given up as I was; never one
So deeply versed in all the demon's arts.
Yea, I am Cyprianus, whom, as a child,
My parents brought and dedicated unto Apollo.
The orgies hue and cry became my lullaby;
The fearsome dragon's feast was celebrated.*

*At seven years they consecrated me
Unto the Sun-God, Mithras.
Then I lived as a citizen in Athens' noble city;
Such was my parents' wish.
When I was ten, I lit Demeter's torches;
I sank myself In Kora's mournful death-complaint.
Then, as a temple-child,
I nourished Pallas' serpent within the castle's walls.
Then I ascended on the forest-mount,
To Olympus' height, that fools would pretend
Was the radiant dwelling-place of Gods, sublime.
I saw the Horae and the hustling winds.
The days' long chorus, wafted on wings of fantasy,
To speed through life on magic wings.
I saw the spirits' fiery headlong fray,
And ambuscades, deceitful. Some of them
Bluster and burst with ridicule and glee,
While others, petrified in terror, stand rooted.
I saw the ranks of Goddesses and Gods;
For forty days or more I lingered there.
And as the sun did set, I ate the fruits
Of leafy, shady bowers. And there, like messengers
From kingly castles, sped the spirit-beings,
Then to descend to earth with thousand ills
To vex the race of men.*

*I numbered fifteen year, already knew
The power and work of spirits and of Gods;
And of high priests, my teachers, there were seven.
It was my parents' will that I should gain
Science of all that bides upon the earth,
In the airy realms, and in the oceans' depths.
I searched through that which, in the human breast,
Brews destruction.
What ferments in the herb in flowery juices;*

*And, what sickening,
 Creeps around the wearied body.
 Nor did I neglect
 That which the gaudy snake, prince of the world,
 Conceives as challenge the eternal goals of God.
 I wandered on in Argos' fairest land—
 Argos that nourished the rose.
 'Twas just the Season's round of Eos' feast,
 Eos, white-raimented, Tithonos' spouse,
 There I became their priest.
 I learned to know what windy brothers speed
 Through airy spaces and this pole's long round;
 What binds the plough-land with the waters' flood,
 And darkens o'er the skies with showering rain.*

Thus had Cyprian learned to know everything that was to be learned by being, so to speak, initiated into the pre-Christian mysteries. Oh, he describes them exactly — those powers to whom those who were entrusted with the ancient traditions of initiation in a time when those traditions that no longer held good could look up. His description of them, and of all their fruits — which were no longer suitable to that age — is fascinating.

*Myself, I saw the demon face to face,
 When I had won him by my sacrifice.
 I spake to him, and he did answer me
 With words-of-flattery. He praised my youth,
 My fairness and my skill unto his works,
 Assigned to me dominion o'er this world,
 And spirits to accomplish my behests;
 He greeted me by name,
 And all his great ones looked on us amazed.
 His countenance is like unto the flower
 Of purest gold: and on his head a diadem
 Of glittering stones; his raiment's like a flame;
 And all the earth doth shiver as he moves.*

*In dense array, around his mighty throne,
Spear-bearers stand, their eyes cast on the ground.
Thus he makes himself to be a God.
He imitates the Great One's works.
Boldly challenging,
He creates but powerless fantasies —
For all his demons' being is but emptiness.*

And then it goes onto describe how the temptation approaches him, and how all this works on him before he comes to know the Christ-Impulse.

*I wandered away from the Persian land,
And came to Antioch, great town of Syria.
Here I accomplished many a miracle
Of hellish mystery and of enchantments' crafts.
Here a fair youth, Aglaidas, once sought me out;
And others with him. Fired with passionate love
Towards a maiden, his heart was aglow.
Justina, was her name. He now entreated me,
Clasping around my knees, to conjure her
Into his arms by means of magic craft.
I hearkened to his prayers; and then, at first,
The demon's powerlessness appeared to me.
Many were the spirit-throngs he ruled,
So many he sent out to tempt her soul;
And everyone returned from her abashed.
I too, who pleaded for Aglaidas,
Justina's faith, purity, and piety could put to shame.
She showed me then the vanity of mine arts,
And many a sleepless night I lingered on
With manifold enchantments' drudgery.
Ten weeks the prince of spirits stormed the heart
Of yonder maiden. Till Eros, alas,
Not only sped his shaft to wound Aglaidas:
I too was seized and torn with frenzied love.*

And from this confusion into which the old world brought him, Cyprian is healed through the Christ-Impulse; he cast aside the old magic to understand the Christ-Impulse in its full greatness. We have later in the Faust poem a kind of shadow of this legend, but filled with greater poetic power. In such a figure as this, we see very strongly how the Christ-Impulse, which, with some recapitulations, we have just brought before our souls in a twofold figure, was felt in the early Christian centuries.

A third aspect of the Christ-Impulse is one which can especially bring home to us how, through that which in the full sense of the word we may call Anthroposophy, we can feel ourselves united with all that is human. This is the aspect which is most uniquely set forth in St. Luke's gospel, and which then worked on in his representation of the Christ-Impulse. It works on through the love, simplicity and powerlessness with which the Christ Jesus of St. Luke's gospel is placed before our hearts. All can feel themselves near to the child of St. Luke's gospel, which is not shown to the magic kings, but to the poor shepherds from the hills.

The being of St. Matthew's gospel stands at the summit of human evolution, and spiritual kings, magic kings, paid homage to him. The child of St. Luke's gospel stands there in simplicity, as a child received by no great ones; received only by the shepherds from the hills. Nor does he stand within human evolution, this child of St. Luke's gospel. We are not told in this gospel how the wickedness of the world felt itself challenged by his kingly spiritual power. No, but although we are not at once brought face to face with Herod's power and wickedness, it is clearly shown to us how what is given in this child is so great, so noble, so full of significance, that humanity itself cannot receive it into its ranks. It appears poor and rejected, as though cast into a corner by human evolution, and there, in a peculiar manner, it shows us its extra-human, its divine, that is to say, its cosmic origin. And what an inspiration flowed from this gospel of St. Luke from all those who, again and again, gave us scenes — in pictures and in other artistic works — which were especially called forth by St. Luke's gospel. If we compare the various artistic productions, do we not feel how those, who throughout the centuries were inspired by St. Luke's gospel, show us Jesus as a being with whom everyone, even the simplest, can feel akin. Through that which worked on through the Luke Jesus-Child, the simplest person comes to feel the whole event in Palestine as a family happening, which concerns him or her personally. No other gospel worked on in

the same way as the gospel of St. Luke, with its sublime and happy flowing mood, making the Jesus-Being intimate to human souls. And yet, all is contained in this childlike picture, all that should be contained in a certain aspect of the Christ-Impulse, namely, that the highest thing in the world, in the whole world, is love; that wisdom is something great, worthy to be striven after— for without wisdom beings cannot exist — but that love is something yet greater; that the might and the power with which the world was created is something great — without which the world cannot exist — but that love is something yet greater. And one has a right feeling for the Christ-Impulse who can feel this higher nature of love over against the natures of power and strength and wisdom. As human, spiritual individualities we must strive for wisdom, for wisdom is one of the divine impulses of the world. That we must strive for wisdom, that wisdom must be the sacred treasure that enables us to evolve, the first scene of *The Soul's Probation* was intended to show. We must not let wisdom fall away; we must cherish it in order to ascend, through wisdom, on the ladder of human evolution. But wisdom is a twofold thing: wisdom of the Gods and wisdom of the Luciferic powers. The being who strives after wisdom must inevitably come near to the antagonists of the Gods, to the throng of the Light-Bearer, to the army of Lucifer. Therefore, there is no divine all-wisdom, for wisdom is always confronted with an opponent in Lucifer.

And power and might! Through wisdom the world is conceived, through wisdom it is seen, it is illumined; through power and might the world is fashioned and built. Everything that comes about, comes about through the power and the might of higher beings, and we should be shutting ourselves out from the world if we did not seek our share in this power and might. We see this mighty power in the world when lightning flashes through the clouds; we perceive it when the thunder rolls or when the rain pours down from heavenly spaces into the earth to fertilize it, or when the rays of the sun stream down to conjure forth the seedlings of plants slumbering in the earth. In the forces that work down on to the earth, we see this power working blessing as sunshine, as forces in rain and clouds; but, on the other hand, we must also see this power and might in volcanoes, for instance, which seem to rise up and rebel against the earth itself — heavenly force pitted against heavenly force. We look into the world, and we know if we would ourselves be beings of the world-all, then something of them must work in us. We must have our share in power and in might. Through them we stand within the world: divine and Ahrimanic powers live and pulsate through us. The all-power is not

all-powerful, for it always has its antagonist in Ahriman.

Between them, between power and wisdom, stands love; and if what we feel is true love, that alone is divine. We can speak of "all-power," of "all-strength," as of an ideal; but over against them stands Ahriman. We can speak of "all-wisdom" as of an ideal; but over against it stands Lucifer. But to say "all-love," seems absurd; for if we love rightly it is capable of no increase. Wisdom can be small; it can be augmented. Power can be small; it can be augmented. Therefore, all-wisdom and all-power can stand as ideals. But in cosmic love, we feel that it does not allow the conception of all-love; for love is something unique.

As the Jesus-Child is placed before us in St. Luke's gospel, so do we feel it as the personification of love; the personification of love between all-wisdom and all-power. We really feel it like this because it is a child. Only it is intensified, because in addition to all that any child has, this child has the quality of forlornness; it is cast out into a lonely corner. The magic building of man — we see it already laid out in the organism of the child. Wherever in the wide world — all we turn our gaze, there is nothing that comes into being through so much wisdom as this magic building, which appears before our eyes, unspoiled as yet, in the childlike organism. And just as the all-wisdom appears in the physical body of the child, it also appears in the etheric body, where the wisdom of cosmic powers is expressed; it appears as well in the astral body and the ego. Children appear before us as wisdom personified. And if a child is thrown out, as it were, into a corner of humankind, as the child, Jesus was, then we can feel that, in his separation, He lies there as a picture of perfection, a concentrated picture of world-wisdom.

But when we look on the child as it is described in St. John's gospel, all-power, too, appears personified to us. How shall we feel how the all-power is expressed in relation to the body of the child, the being of the child? We must make present in our souls the whole force of that which divine powers and forces of nature can achieve. Think of the might of the forces and powers of nature near to the earth when the elements are storming; transplant yourself into the powers of nature that hold sway, surging and welling up and down in the earth; think of all the brewing of world-powers and world-forces, of the clash of the good forces with the Ahrimanic forces; the whirling and raging of it all. And now imagine this storming

and raging of the elements to be held back from a tiny spot in the world so that the magic building of the child's body may be protected. Were it exposed for a moment to the violence of the powers of nature, it would be swept away! Then you may feel how it is immersed in the all-power. And now you may realize the feeling that can pass through the human soul when it gazes with a simple heart on that which is expressed in St. Luke's gospel. If one approached this concentrated wisdom of the child with the greatest human wisdom, human wisdom would appear as mockery and foolishness! For it can never be so great as was the wisdom used in the creation of the child-body before us. The highest wisdom remains foolishness and must stand abashed before the child-body and pay homage to heavenly wisdom; but it knows that it cannot reach it. This wisdom is a mockery; it must feel itself rejected through its own foolishness.

No, with wisdom we cannot approach that which is placed before us as the Jesus-Being in St. Luke's gospel. Can we approach it with power? We cannot approach it with power, for the use of power can only have a meaning where a contrary power comes into play. But the child meets us — whether we would use much or little power — with its powerlessness, and mocks our power in its powerlessness! It would be meaningless to approach the child with power, since it meets us with nothing but its powerlessness.

That is the wonderful thing — that the preparation of the Christ-Impulse in the child, Jesus, meets us in St. Luke's gospel in just this way. Be we ever so wise, we cannot approach Him with our wisdom; neither can we approach Him with our power. Of all that at other times connects us with the world, nothing can approach the child, Jesus, as he is presented in the St. Luke's gospel. He can neither be approached through wisdom, nor through power; he can only be approached through love. To bring love towards the child-being, unlimited love, that is the one thing possible. The power of love, and the justification and signification of love and love alone — that is what we can feel so deeply when we let the contents of St. Luke's gospel work on our soul.

We live in the world, and we must not scorn any of the impulses of the world. It would be a denial of our humanity and a betrayal of the Gods for us not to strive after wisdom; we live well if we realize every day that it is our human duty to strive

after wisdom. We are placed in the world, and we are a play of the forces and powers of the world, of the all-power that pulsates through the world. But there is one moment in which we may forget this, in which we may remember what St. Luke's gospel places before us: when we think of the Child that is yet more filled with wisdom and yet more powerless than other children and before whom the highest love appears in its full justification, before whom wisdom and power must stand still.

We can feel the significance of the fact that this Christ-Child, received by the simple shepherds, is placed before us as the third aspect of the Christ-Impulse. As well as the spirit-kingly aspect and the great cosmic aspect, the childlike aspect is also presented to us. The spirit-kingly aspect meets us in such a way that we are reminded of the highest wisdom. The cosmic aspect meets us, and we know that through it the whole direction of earthly evolution is given a new impulse. The power of this aspect is so great that it conquers even death. That which must be added to wisdom and power as a third thing, and must sink into our souls as something transcending the other two, is set before us as that from which our evolution on earth, on the physical plane, proceeds. This has brought home to humanity, through the ever-returning picture of Jesus' birth at Christmas, the whole significance of love in the world and in human evolution. In the St. Luke gospel, on the Christmas night of initiation, the birth of the Jesus-Child is put before us. Yearly, as the same night comes round again, by contemplating the birth of the Jesus-Child, the understanding of genuine, true love that resounds above all can be born in our souls. And if, at Christmas, an understanding of the feeling of love is rightly awakened in us, if we celebrate this birth of Christ, this awakening of love, then, from the moment in which we experience it, what we need for the remaining hours and days of the year can radiate, flow through, and bless the wisdom that it is ours to strive after in every hour and in every day of the year.

Already in Roman times, it was especially through the emphasizing of this love impulse, that Christianity brought into human evolution the feeling that something can be found in human souls through which they can come near each other — not in that which the world gives to human souls, but in that which human souls have through themselves. There has always been the need of having such a coming together, in love, of human beings. But what had become of this feeling in Rome,

at the time when the mystery of Golgotha took place? It had become the Saturnalia. The Saturnalia, in which all differences of rank and standing between human beings were suspended, took place beginning on the seventeenth of December. That which originated from the outer world was swept away, but for fun and merriment the children were given "Saturnalia presents." These then developed into our Christmas presents. Thus, ancient Rome had been driven to take refuge in fun, in joking, in order to transcend the ordinary social distinctions. Into the midst of all this, the new principle, in which people do not call forth joking and merriment, but the highest in their souls — the spiritual entered. Thus did the feeling of equality enter Christianity in the time when Roman culture had assumed the merrymaking form of the Saturnalia. This also speaks to us of an aspect of love, of general human love that can exist between us if we grasp an understanding of the deepest part of a human being. We can grasp this deepest aspect of being, when, on Christmas Eve, the child awaits the coming of the Christmas child or the Christmas angel. How does the child wait on Christmas Eve? It awaits the coming of the Christmas child or angel, knowing that He is not coming from human lands, but from the spiritual world! The child has a kind of understanding of the spiritual world, and shows itself to be like the grown-up people.

For they too know the same thing that the child knows — that the Christ-Impulse came into earthly evolution from higher worlds. So it is not only the child of St. Luke's gospel that comes before our souls at Christmas, but that which Christmas shall bring near to human hearts also comes near every child's soul in the loveliest way, and unites childlike understanding with grown-up understanding.

Childlike feeling is one pole of experiencing this spiritual connection. The other pole is that which we can feel in our highest spiritual concerns if we remain faithful to the impulse that was mentioned at the beginning of this evening's thoughts. This is the impulse whereby we awaken our wills to the spiritual light, and, after this, strive in our newly founded Anthroposophical Society. For it is our will that what is to come into human evolution shall be borne by something that comes into us from spiritual realms as an impulse. And just as the child feels towards the angel of Christmas who brings it its Christmas presents, and feels, in its childlike way, connected with the spiritual — so may we feel ourselves connected with the spiritual gift that we long for on Christmas night as the impulse

which can bring us the high ideal for which we strive. And if in this circle we feel ourselves united in such love as can stream in from a right understanding of the night of initiation, then we shall be able to attain that which is to be attained through the Anthroposophical Society — our anthroposophical ideal. We shall attain that which is to be attained in united work if a ray of that person-to-person love can take hold of us. We can accomplish this when we give ourselves in the right way to the Christmas thought.

Thus, those of our dear friends who are united with us tonight may have a kind of excellence of feeling. Though they may not be sitting under the Christmas tree in the way that is customary in this time, our dear friends are yet sitting under the Christmas tree. And all of you who are spending this initiation night with us under the Christmas tree: try to awaken in your souls something of the feeling that can come over us when we feel why it is that we are here together — that we may already learn to realize in our souls those impulses of love which must once in a distant and yet more distant future come nearer and nearer to us; when the Christ-Impulse, of which our Christmas has reminded us so well, takes hold of human evolution with ever greater and greater power, greater and greater understanding. For it will only take hold if souls are found who understand it in its full significance. But in this realm, understanding cannot exist without love — the fairest thing in human evolution — to which we give birth in our souls on this night when we transfuse our hearts with that spiritual picture of the Jesus-Child, cast out by the rest of humankind, thrown into a corner, born in a stable.

Such is the picture that is given to us of Him, as though he comes into human evolution from outside and is received by the simplest in spirit, the poor shepherds. If today we seek to give birth to the love-impulse that can pour into our souls from this picture, then it will have the force to promote that which we would and should achieve, to assist in the tasks that we have set ourselves in the realm of Anthroposophy, and that karma has pointed out to us as deep and right tasks in the realm of Anthroposophy.

Let us take this with us from this evening's thoughts on the Christmas initiation night, saying that we have come together in order to take out with us the impulse of love, not only for a short time, but for all our striving set before us, inasmuch as we can understand it through the spirit of our anthroposophical view of the world. ❖

◆ From *THE BHAGAVAD GITA AND THE EPISTLES OF PAUL*, Anthroposophic Press, 1971, p.86.

This Paul characterized with powerful words:

I indeed, I will show you the way higher than all the other ways. Though I could speak out of the spirit with the tongues of men and angels and have not love, my speech would sound as brass and a clanging cymbal. And though I could prophesy, and reveal all mysteries, and communicate all the world's knowledge; though I have such faith as would remove mountains, and have not love, it all would come to nothing. Though I gave to others all my spiritual gifts; yes, though I gave my very body to be burned, and have not love, everything would be in vain.

Love endures. Love is kind. Love does not know envy, nor boasting, nor vanity. It does not violate propriety, nor seek its own advantage. It does not let itself be provoked to anger. It bears no malice toward anyone; nor rejoices over injustice, but only over the truth. Love encompasses everything; permeates all beliefs; is hopeful in all things, and in all matters practices tolerance.

Love, if it be love, is never lost. A prophecy ceases after it is fulfilled. What is spoken-with-tongues dies away when it no longer speaks to human hearts. Knowledge vanishes as soon as its subject is exhausted, because all knowledge is fragmentary; likewise all prophesying. But when that which is complete has come, then the fragments have lost their meaning.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child. Since I have become a man, my world of childhood is past. Now we see only dark outlines in the mirror, but one day we shall see the spirit face to face. Now is my knowledge in fragments, but one day I shall know fully what I myself am. Lasting is Faith; lasting is the certainty of Hope and lasting is Love. But Love is the greatest of these, therefore it is supreme.

All spiritual gifts may be yours. He who is able to prophesy must also strive to attain Love. He who speaks with tongues speaks not among men but among Gods. No one hears him just because he utters spiritual mysteries. ❖

Original from Emil Bock's translation of the *NEW TESTAMENT* into German (Urachhaus, 1980), p.496. Not available in English. Following passages from *THE BIBLE, KING JAMES VERSION*, Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library,

◆ From *Letter from Paul to the Ephesians, 6:10-17*.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ❖

Verse by Angelus Silesius

◆ Translated by Jan Kees Saltet.

*It was in childhood that I experienced the Divine;
therefore to both God and childhood I do now incline.* ❖

◆ Translated by Jan Kees Saltet.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Von Kùgelgen's presentation gives the impression that this is a single verse; it is actually his arrangement of Steiner's paraphrases, which were made at different times.

*May God be revealed in the heights
And peace be on earth
For people united in good will.*

*Revelation of divine forces in the heights —
And peace for people on the earth
United in good will.*

*Divine revelation in spirit heights,
Peace, peace, ever more and more
For all human souls on earth,
United in good will.*

*Revelation throughout the heights to God,
Peace and silence throughout earthly realms,
Bliss in human beings. ❖*

◆ From *CHRISTIANITY BEGAN AS A RELIGION BUT IS GREATER THAN ALL RELIGIONS*, Anthroposophical Publishing Co., London, 1959, pp.17-18.

The Spirit that will make men free is the Holy Spirit. The true Christian may not sin against this Spirit. Whoever does so, sins against Christianity itself, against the promised Spirit, which alone can bring together the single human individualities.

The gospels relate that Christ-Jesus cast out demons. Demons exist only as long as human beings have not become truly free, as long as they have not taken into themselves the spirit of wisdom. Human beings are filled with beings of every kind which stream in and out of their lower members. We call these beings, specters, ghosts, demons, devils, and the like (using a homely analogy, we may think of the little maggots which crawl in and out of cheese.) In showing Himself as the Spirit by whom the demons are expelled, Christ-Jesus reveals Himself as the Spirit of Freedom. The demons can be expelled only by evoking the one Spirit in opposition to the others, the Spirit of Freedom in opposition to all other spirits.

And now think briefly of those ancient communities which consisted first of the family or tribe, and then developed into folk-communities. How can these human beings who have now become free individuals be brought together? Imagine that everyone sitting here had become free and that the Spirit of Truth were living within one and all! Would there ever be conflict or dissension among us? No, for there are no different standpoints if the Spirit alone unites us. In ancient times the sway of external law was necessary in order that human beings might be held together. Two individuals who know the Spirit of Truth will of themselves feel drawn to one another.

Thus, at the beginning of the evolution of humanity stands the law; at the end, peace, harmonious co-operation. This is called grace in esoteric Christianity, in contrast to the law. It is nothing else than the capacity to share, with complete harmony, in the feelings of other human beings. This is the most profound concept of Christianity.

The astral body filled with the Holy Spirit is alike in all; the Spirit of Truth is alike in everyone. Now think of this Spirit in someone in whom, at the same time, the Christ has awakened that principle which works as the Life-Spirit in the Life-Body.

If everyone permeates his or her etheric body with this feeling, then within each heart you have a feeling for the uniting Spirit. Separate individuals, drawn together by the wisdom common to them all — and what is felt by those individuals within themselves — that is true charity — that is grace.

Grace was brought by Him who at the beginning of our era enshrined within His individuality the fullness of the Christos — by Him who was the first to bring to fulfillment the principle of united humanity. Christ-Jesus embodied in Himself that which must live in every single human being. Through Him there has come into the world that which is born of freedom and peaceful co-operation. Be quickened to life again; kill the spirit of discord. This is the message of Paul. ❖

Isis, Sophia and Maria Unified in Love Through the Child

◆ From *THE SEARCH FOR THE NEW ISIS, THE DIVINE SOPHIA*, Mercury Press, Spring Valley, NY 1994, pp.30-33.

Oh, my dear friends, the soul will attain to altogether new feelings if it is willing to experience the new Isis legend within modern humanity. Lucifer kills Isis and transfers her body into the cosmic spaces, which have become a mathematical abstraction, or the grave of Isis; then comes the search for Isis, and her discovery through the impulse given by the inner force of spiritual knowledge, which places into the lifeless sky that which stars and planets reveal through an inner life, so that they appear as monuments of the spiritual powers that surge through space. We look in the right spirit towards the manger when we first let the powers that surge through space kindle our feeling, and then look at that being who came into the world through the Child. We know that we bear this being within us, but we must understand Him. Just as the Egyptians looked from Isis to Osiris, so we must learn to look again to the new Isis, the holy Sophia. The Christ will appear in spiritual form during the twentieth century, not through an external happening, but inasmuch as human beings find that force which is represented by the holy Sophia. The present age has the tendency to lose this Isis-Force, this force of the Mary. It was killed by all that arose with the modern consciousness of humankind. New forms of religion have in part exterminated just this view of the Mary.

This is the mystery of modern humanity. The Mary-Isis has been killed, and she must be sought, just as Osiris was sought by Isis; but she must be sought in the wide space of heaven, with that force that Christ can awaken in us, if we give ourselves to Him in the right way.

Let us picture this rightly; let us immerse ourselves in this new Isis legend, which must be experienced, and let us fill our souls with it. Only then shall we experience in a true sense this Holy Eve of Christmas leading us into Christmas Day, the Day of Christ. My dear friends, this anthroposophical community can become a community of human beings united in love because of the search in which they set out together. Let us realize this most intimate and dear task, let us go in spirit to the manger and bring to the Child our sacrifice and our gift, in the knowledge that something altogether new must fill our souls, in order that we may undertake the tasks which can lead humankind out of barbarism into a new civilization.

To this end it must really be so among us that one helps the other in love, so that a real community of souls arises in which envy and all such things disappear, and in which we do not look each at our own particular goal but face together, united in love, the great goal which we have in common. The mystery which the Christmas Child brought into the world contains this — to look at a goal in common, without discord among us. For the common goal implies union and harmony. The light of Christmas should shine as a light of peace, a light that brings peace outside, only because first of all it sheds an inner peace into the hearts of human beings. We should understand this and say together: Let us realize this and work together with love in the great task.

Then, and only then, shall we understand Christmas. If we cannot realize this, we shall not understand Christmas. Let us remember that when we sow discord, this discord hinders us in understanding the one who appeared among us on Christmas Eve. Can we not pour this Christmas Mystery into our souls, as something that unites our hearts in love and unity? We cannot do this, my dear friends, unless we understand what Spiritual Science really means. Nothing will grow out of this community if we merely bring into it ideas and impulses we have collected from all corners of the world, where phrase and routine hold sway. Let us remember that our community is facing a difficult year, that all forces must be gathered together, and let us celebrate Christmas in this spirit. Oh my dear friends, I should like to find words that appeal deeply to the heart of each one of you on this evening. Then, each one of you would feel that my words contain a greeting, which is at the same time an appeal, to kindle Spiritual Science within your hearts, so that it may become a force which can help humanity to raise itself up again from its terrible oppression.

These, my dear friends, are the aspects from which I have gathered the thoughts that I wished to give you. Be sure that they are meant for each one of you, as a warm Christmas greeting, as something that can lead you into the new year in the very best way. In this spirit, accept my words as a warm and loving Christmas greeting. ❖

◆ From *NEWBORN MIGHT AND STRENGTH EVERLASTING. A CHRISTMAS OFFERING*, Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1994, pp.10-13.

The sun's forces were always victorious over the egoism of the earth. Then we were filled with strength and courage and could feel that just as we were able to experience outwardly the sun's victory over the forces of the earth when it breaks into the dark of the night of winter, so we should be able to experience something that was active within us, deep down in our souls, as a spiritual sun that would reign triumphant during the earthly winter solstice.

Thus, the Mystery of Golgotha was seen to be in our inner being, like the rising of the earthly sun. We realize that the spring and summer of the earth's evolution occurred in the ages before the Mystery of Golgotha. Then we still possessed through our atavistic clairvoyance the inheritance of our link with the divine spiritual worlds. Now we are living in the winter of earthly evolution, and undoubtedly, the mechanical forces of industrial and commercial life will grow increasingly strong. The earth's winter can be found externally in the worlds, but also within, because we no longer have the divine spiritual world of the earth's spring and summer around us. We used to see in the sun's victory during the winter solstice, a symbol for the victory of the spiritual sun in the depths of the human soul. Modern human beings can experience this again today when they contemplate the Mystery of Golgotha and prepare themselves for the approaching Christmas festival. In the past, human beings looked at the Mystery of Golgotha and said, "No matter how wildly and chaotically the winter storms may rage in us, there is one hope that can never be abandoned. The Christ-Impulse, related to all human life on earth, will assert itself in contrast to the weather-like changes in the human soul. This can occur because the Child of Humanity, born in the Nathan Jesus boy, entered humankind with all the qualities possessed by the human soul before it descended into its earthly incarnations."

My dear anthroposophical friends, I wished to place thoughts like these before you so that you can gather from them all that can be felt in the contemplation of the child force in humanity — that force that is also the force of eternity. This was, and can always be felt, when we contemplate the Child on Christmas Eve. Although we must acquire other feelings than those expressed, for instance, in the painting

I have described; although we must rise to a knowledge concerning the two Jesus boys, nevertheless, it remains necessary that we connect such knowledge with our most sacred feelings and strongest hopes. Then we shall know that, since the Mystery of Golgotha, the aura of our earth contains something to which we shall never turn in vain when we wish to be filled with hope in our earthly suffering, and with strength and courage in all our joys. It is just as necessary for us to remember this as for those who felt so happy when they could watch a simple Christmas play. Indeed, we, too, feel just as happy when we see such a play because we feel our relationship with those of the past who enjoyed it so keenly. We, too, can appreciate the bounty that was given to us with the Child that entered humankind.

Through the strength obtained in the contemplation of the Heavenly Child, it has made it possible for us to remain upright during the winter of the earth. We know that the physical sun triumphs over the egoism of the earth in spring. We also know that the spiritual impulse of the sun that flowed into the evolution of the earth will acquire ever greater strength in the depths of the human soul. When we celebrate the Christmas festival, we must be mindful of this impulse. Once, the historical event took place. It is indeed true that the Christ Being entered the aura of the earth. True also are the words of Angelus Silesius.

*Were Christ to be born
A thousand times in Bethlehem
And not in you,
Then forever lost you must remain.*

The child born at Bethlehem must be born in ever greater depths of the soul in order that human beings may take hold of what is expressed in the Campo Santo painting as the childlike soul, borne aloft spiritually by the wings of angels and thus saved from the clutches of Ahriman. It is the earthly destiny of the soul to remain young even though the body may grow old. Our higher destiny is to preserve this spiritual youth in relation to the Mystery of Golgotha, even when the body grows old. The soul will then feel increasingly sure that no matter how wildly the winter storms may rage within, and no matter how great the temptations, there is one steadfast hope that never fails. The impulse that entered with the Mystery of Golgotha can rise from the depths of the soul. This should live in our memories during the Christmas festival.

I should like to convey in the following words what we should try to experience as Christmas feeling arising from our anthroposophical world conception. Let this stand as a contrast to what humanity used to experience in the past in a simple and spontaneous way,

*Triumphant in our deepest soul
Lives the Spirit of the Sun;
Quickened forces, set astir,
Awake the feelings to His presence
In the inner winter life.
Hope, impulse of the heart,
Beholds the Spirit victory of the Sun
In the blessed Light of Christmas,
The sign of highest life
In the winter's deepest night. ❖*

◆ From *THE BIRTH OF CHRIST IN THE HUMAN SOUL*, Anthroposophic Press, 1940, Basel, December 22, 1918, pp. 1-24.

Like two mighty pillars of the spirit, have the two annual festivals of Christmas and Easter been set by the Christian cosmic feeling within the course of the year. They should stand as symbols of the course of human life. We may say that in the conception of Christmas and the conception of Easter, there stand two spiritual pillars before the human soul, upon which are inscribed the two great mysteries of our physical existence. We must look upon them very differently from the way in which we view other events in the course of our physical lives. It is true that a supersensible element is projected into this physical life — through sense observation, through intellectual judgments, through the content of feeling and will. But this supersensible element is in other cases clearly manifest as such, for instance, when the Christian cosmic feeling undertakes to symbolize it in the festival of Pentecost. In the Christmas conception, however, and that of Easter, attention is drawn to those two events occurring within the course of physical life which are, in their external appearance, purely physical, but which, in contrast with all other physical events, do not immediately manifest themselves as physical events. We can look upon the physical life of human beings as we look upon nature; we can thus look upon the external side of the physical life, the external manifestation of the spiritual. But we can never view with our physical vision the two boundary experiences of the course of human life, not even the external aspect, the external manifestation, without being brought face to face, even through our physical vision, with a tremendous riddle, an element of mystery, in these two events. They are the events of birth and death. And in the life of Christ Jesus stand these two events of our physical life, and likewise in the Christmas and Easter conceptions, reminding us of them and confronting the responsive Christian heart.

In the thought of Christmas and the thought of Easter, the human soul wills to look upon the two great mysteries. And, as it thus looks, it finds in this contemplation strength filled with light for thought, content filled with power for the will, an upright lift of the whole human being, from whatever situation one needs this upright lift. As they thus confront us, these two pillars of the spirit — the thought of Christmas and the thought of Easter — they possess an eternal worth.

But, in the course of our evolution, our capacities of conception have approached in manifold ways the great Christmas thought and the great Easter thought. During the earliest times of the evolution of Christianity, when the Event of Golgotha had penetrated with shattering effect into human emotions, human beings gradually found their way to the view of the Redeemer dying on Golgotha. They came, during the earliest Christian centuries, to feel in the Crucified One hanging on the cross the thought of redemption, and gradually formed for themselves the great and powerful imagination of the Christ dying on the cross. But in the later times — especially since the modern age began — Christian feeling, adapting itself to the materialism rising in human evolution, has turned to the picture of the childlike element entering the world in the newborn Jesus.

We can certainly say that a sensitive feeling will find, in the way in which the Christian sentiment of Europe has turned during recent centuries to the Christmas manger, something of a materialistic Christianity. The craving — this is not said in a bad sense — to caress the infant Jesus has become trivial in the course of the centuries. And many a song about the infant Jesus felt in our day to be beautiful — or charming, as many express it — will not seem to us to possess a deep enough seriousness in the presence of these more serious times.

But the Easter thought and the Christmas thought, my dear friends, are two eternal pillars, eternal memorial pillars, of the human heart. And we can truly say that our age of new spiritual revelations will cast a new light upon the Christmas thought; that the Christmas thought will gradually come to be felt in a new form and in a glorious way. It will be our task to hear in the present world events the call to a renewal of many an old conception, a call to a new revelation of the spirit.

It will be our task to understand how a new conception of Christmas, for the strengthening and uplifting of the human soul, is working its way up through the present course of world events. The birth and death of the human being, no matter how we may analyze them, how intensely we may look at them, manifest themselves as events which play their role directly upon the physical plane, and in which the spiritual is so dominant that no one who earnestly reflects upon things could deny that these two events, these earthly events of human life, give evidence as they work upon the human being that man is the citizen of a spiritual world.

No vision of the natural world can ever succeed — in the midst of what can be perceived by the senses and understood by the intellect — in finding in birth and death anything other than events in which the intervention of the spirit is manifested directly in the physical. Only these two events manifest themselves thus to the human heart.

As to the Christmas event, the event of birth, the human and Christian heart must have an ever-deepening sense of mystery. We can say that human beings have seldom risen to the level whence they could, in the true sense, direct their look to the mysterious nature of birth. Very seldom, indeed, have they done this, but when they have, they have done so in concepts that speak to the utmost depths of the human heart.

So it is, my dear friends, in the conception associated with the spiritual life of Switzerland of the fifteenth century, with Nicholas von der Flue. It is related of him — and he himself related this — that before his birth, before he could breathe the outer air, he had beheld his own human form. He also beheld, before his birth, the ceremony of his own christening, the persons who were present at the christening and who shared in his earliest experiences. With the exception of one elderly person who was then present and whom he did not know, he recognized the others because he had already seen them before he beheld the light of the world.

However we may view this narration, we shall not be able to escape the impression that it points, in a way, to the mystery of human birth, which confronts world history so magnificently, as symbolized in the Christmas conception. In the story of Nicholas von der Flue, we shall find the suggestion that, connected with our entrance into the physical life, there is something which is concealed from the everyday view of humanity by a very thin partition wall; by a wall which can be broken through when such a karmic situation exists as was present in the case of Nicholas von der Flue. Such a startling illusion to the mystery of birth and of Christmas still meets us here and there; but we must say that humanity has as yet very little awareness of the fact that birth and death, the two boundary pillars of human life facing us in the midst of the physical world, reveal themselves even in their physical manifestation as spiritual events. Events such as these could never occur within the mere course of nature — events in which divine powers intervene

— evidenced in the very fact that both these boundary experiences of the course of human life remain mysteries, even in their physical manifestation.

The new revelation of the Christ now leads us to contemplate the course of our human life, so we may safely say, as Christ wills that we should contemplate it in the twentieth century. Let us recall today, as we desire to enter deeply into the thought of Christmas, a saying reported to have been uttered by Christ Jesus that can rightly lead us to the Christmas conception. The saying runs thus: "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." "Except ye become as little children" is truly not an exhortation to strip away all the mystery character of the Christmas conception and to drag it down to the triviality of "dear little Jesus," as many folk and artistic songs have done — but the folk songs less than the artistic — in the course of the materialistic evolution of Christianity. This very saying: "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," impels us to look upward to mighty impulses surging through the stream of human evolution. And in our own present time, when all that is taking place in the world surely does not give occasion for lapsing into trivial conceptions of Christmas, when the human heart is filled with so much that is painful, when this human heart must reflect upon so many millions of human beings who have met their death in the last few years, must reflect upon countless multitudes who hunger for food in this time surely nothing is fitting for us save to behold the mighty thoughts within world history which impel humanity in its onward course, thoughts to which we can be guided by the saying, "Except ye shall become as little children," which we can supplement by this other saying: "Unless you live your life in the light of this thought, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

My dear friends, the very moment when the human being enters into the world as a child he or she withdraws from the world of spirit. For what occurs in the physical world, the procreation and growth of ones physical body, is only the ensheathing of that event which cannot be described otherwise than by saying that, in our deepest being, we withdraw from the spiritual world.

We are born out of the spirit into a body. When a Rosicrucian said: "Ex deo nascimur," he or she meant the human being to the extent that we enter the

physical world. For that which institutes the sheaths around the human being, which renders us a physical totality here on the earthly globe, is what is indicated by the saying: "Ex deo nascimur." If we look at the center of the human being, at the inner midmost entity, we must say that we journey out of the spirit into the physical world. Through that which occurs in the physical world, that upon which we have looked down from the land of the spirit before our conception or our birth, we are enveloped in our physical bodies in order to experience things that cannot be experienced otherwise. But, in our centermost being, we come out of the spiritual world. And we are of such a nature that in our earliest years — to the eyes of those who are not blinded by the illusion of materialism — we reveal, how we have come out of the spirit. For those who possess insight, the after effects of experiences in the spiritual world are revealed to their feelings. It is to this mystery that such narrations as that associated with the name of Nicholas von der Flue are intended to allude.

A trivial view, strongly influenced by a materialistic mode of thinking, declares in its simplicity that the human being gradually develops his or her ego in the course of life from birth to death; that this ego becomes more and more powerful and mighty, more and more distinctly manifest. This is a naive way of thinking, my dear friends. For, if we look upon the true ego of a human being, upon that which comes into a physical sheathing at the birth of the human being out of the spiritual world, we then express ourselves very differently about a human being's whole physical evolution. That is, we then know that, as the human being progressively develops in the physical body, the true ego actually vanishes out of the physical form, that it becomes less and less manifest; and what develops here in the physical world between birth and death is only a mirrored reflection of spiritual occurrences, a dead reflection of a higher life. The right form of expression would be to declare that the entire fullness of the human being gradually disappears into the body, becoming continually less and less manifest. As human beings live their physical life here upon the earth, they gradually lose themselves in their bodies, to find themselves again in the spirit after death. So does one who knows the facts express oneself. But one who is ignorant of the facts declares that the child is incomplete, and that the ego, little by little, develops to an ever greater perfection, growing out of the undefined subconscious levels of human existence.

Thus human beings enter the world as spiritual beings. Our bodily natures, while we are children, are still undefined; they have as yet laid small claim to the spiritual nature, which enters physical existence as if falling asleep. This spiritual nature appears to us as so little filled with content only because we can perceive it, in ordinary physical life, just as little as we can perceive the sleeping ego and astral body when they are separated from the physical and etheric bodies. But the fact that we do not perceive a being does not make it less perfect. What human beings have to acquire by means of our physical bodies, is that we entomb ourselves more and more in our physical bodies for the purpose of achieving capacities which can be acquired only in this way, only through the fact that the spirit and soul beings lose themselves for a time in physical existence. In order that we may always remember our spiritual origin, that we may grow strong in the thought that we have journeyed out of the spirit into the physical world, the Christmas conception stands there like a mighty pillar of light amid the Christian cosmic feeling. This thought, as a Christmas thought, must grow ever stronger in the future spiritual evolution of humanity. Then will the Christmas conception become powerful again for humanity; then will humankind once more approach the Christmas festival in such a way as to draw forces for the physical life out of the Christmas conception, which can remind us in the right way of our spiritual origin. Seldom can this Christmas thought be as powerful at the present time as it will then be in human hearts.

It is a strange fact, but noted in the very laws of spiritual existence, that what comes to light in the world, bearing humankind forward, helpful to humankind — does not at once appear in its ultimate form: that it first appears, as it were, tumultuously, as if prematurely brought forth by unlawful spirits in world evolution. We understand the historic evolution of humanity in its true meaning only when we know that truths are not to be understood only as they first appear oftentimes in world history, but that we must consider in relation to truths the right moment for their entrance into human evolution in their true light.

Among many kinds of thoughts which have entered into the evolution of modern humanity — certainly inspired by the I Christ impulse, but at first in a premature form — is the conception of the equality of humankind before God and the world, the equality of all human beings, a thought profoundly Christian but capable of an

ever increasing profundity. But we should not place this thought before human hearts in such a generalization as that given to it by the French Revolution, when it first appeared tumultuously in human evolution. We must be aware of the fact that this life of human beings from birth to death is involved in a process of evolution, and that the primary impulses working upon it are distributed in time. Let us reflect about the human being as he or she enters into sensible existence: they enter life filled with the impulse of the equality of human nature in all humankind. We sense the child nature with the greatest intensity when we see a child permeated through his or her whole being by the conception of the equality of all human beings. Nothing that creates inequality among human beings, nothing that so organizes humankind so that they feel themselves different from others, nothing of this, enters at first into the child's nature. All this is imparted to human beings in the course of physical life. Inequality is created by physical existence; out of the spirit, human beings come forth equal before the world and God and other human beings. Thus does the mystery of the child declare.

To this mystery of the child the Christmas conception is united, and is to find its deeper meaning in the new Christian revelation. For this new Christian revelation will take into account the new Trinity: the human being, as he or she directly represents humanity; the Ahrimanic and the Luciferic. And, as it comes to be known how the human being is placed in the world in a relationship of balance between the Ahrimanic and the Luciferic, it will be understood also what this human being really is in external physical existence.

Most of all, Christian understanding must come about in reference to a certain aspect of human life. Christian thought will clearly proclaim in the future what has already been affirmed by certain spirits since the middle of the nineteenth century, though in stammering accents and never quite distinctly. When we grasp the fact that the thought of equality enters the world in the child, but that forces of inequality later develop in human beings, as if from the fact of their having been born, forces that do not seem to belong to this earth, then just in regard to the conception of equality another profound mystery faces us. To see into this mystery, and through seeing into it to gain a true conception of the human being, will belong, from the present time onward, among the weighty and essential needs in the future evolution of the life of the soul. This is the depressing problem that faces

man: Truly, human beings grow to be unlike, even though they are not so in childhood, by reason of something that is born within them, that is in the blood: their varied gifts and capacities.

The question of gifts and capacities, which cause so many inequalities among people, faces us in connection with the thought of Christmas. And the Christmas festival of the future will always admonish human beings most earnestly, reminding them of the origin of that which differentiates them so widely over the earth, the origin of their gifts, capacities, talents, even the gift of genius. They will have to inquire about the origin of these. And a true balance within the physical existence will be attained only when a human being can point rightly to the origin of the capacities, which differentiate him or her from others. The light of Christmas, or the Christmas candles, must give to evolving humanity an explanation of these capacities; it must answer the profound question: Do individual human beings suffer injustice between birth and death under the ordering of the universe? What is the truth about faculties and gifts?

Now, my dear friends, many things will be seen in a different light when humanity shall have been permeated by the new Christian feeling. Most particularly will it be understood why the Old Testament occult conception possessed a special insight into the nature of the prophetic gift. Who were the prophets who appear in the Old Testament? They were personalities who had been sanctified by Jahve; they were those personalities who were permitted to employ in the right way special spiritual gifts reaching far above those of ordinary humanity. Jahve had first to sanctify their capacities, which are born in human beings as if by reason of their blood. And we know that Jahve works on human beings between their falling asleep and awakening. We know that Jahve does not work within the conscious life. Every true believer of the Old Testament said this with in his or her heart: "That which differentiates human beings as regards their capacities and gifts, which rises to the level of genius in the nature of the prophet, is born, indeed, with the person, but it is not used by him or her for a good purpose unless this person can sink down in sleep into that realm in which Jahve guides his or her soul impulses, and transforms from the spiritual world gifts which are otherwise only physical, inherent in the body."

We point here to a profound mystery of the Old Testament conception. The Old Testament view, including that in regard to the nature of the prophet, must disappear. New conceptions must, for the redemption of humanity, enter into the cosmic historic evolution. That which the ancient Hebrew believed was sanctified by Jahve in the unconscious state of sleep, the human being must become capable of sanctifying in the modern age while one is awake, in a state of clear consciousness. But one can do this only if one knows, on the one hand, that all natural gifts, capacities, talents, even genius, are Luciferic endowments, and work in the world Luciferically, unless they are sanctified and permeated by all that can enter into the world as the impulse of the Christ. We touch upon a tremendously important mystery of the evolution of modern humanity when we grasp the central kernel of the Christmas conception, and call attention to the fact that the Christ must be so understood and so felt by men and women in their hearts that they stand as New Testament human beings before the Christ and say: "In addition to the inclination of the child, his aspiration toward equality, I have been endowed with various capacities and talents. But they can lead permanently to good results, to the welfare of humanity, only provided these gifts, these talents, are dedicated to the service of Christ Jesus; only if the human being strives to permeate his or her whole nature with the Christ, in order that human gifts, talents, genius may be freed from the grasp of Lucifer."

The heart permeated by the Christ takes away from Lucifer what works otherwise Luciferically in the human being's physical existence. This thought must powerfully influence the future evolution of the human soul. This is the new Christmas thought, the new annunciation of the influence of the Christ in our souls, bringing about the transformation of the Luciferic — which does not enter into us because we journey out of the spirit, but is to be found in us because we are clothed in a blood-permeated physical body which bestows upon us capacities derived from the line of heredity. Within the Luciferic stream, within that which works in the stream of heredity, do these characteristics appear, but they are to be conquered and mastered during the physical life by that which the human being can feel in connection with the Christ impulse, not through Jahve's inspiration in sleep, but through the fruition of the human being's experiences in full consciousness.

"Direct yourself, O Christian, to the Christmas thought," — thus does the new Christianity speak — "and lay there upon the altar set up for Christmas every differentiation you have received as a human being from your blood. Sanctify your capacities, sanctify your gifts, and sanctify even your genius as you behold it illuminated by the light which comes from the Christmas tree."

The new annunciation of the spirit must speak a new language, and we must not be dumb and unheeding toward it as it speaks to us in this deeply serious age in which we live. When we are sensitive to such thoughts, we are living with the power with which human beings ought to live in this time. We need to do this in order to discharge the great duties, which are to be assigned to humanity in this very age. The full gravity of the Christmas thought must be experienced: that in our day there must enter into the waking consciousness of humanity what the Christ willed to say to humanity when he uttered the words: "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The thought of equality which the child manifests, if we look upon him in the right way, is not convicted of falsehood by reason of these words, for that Child whose birth we commemorate on Christmas Eve, proclaims to human beings in the course of their evolution through the history of the world — revealing ever new thoughts — clearly and distinctly, that the differentiating gifts we possess must be placed within the light of the Christ who ensouled this Child; that all which these differentiating gifts bring about within us human beings must be placed upon the altar of this Child.

You may now ask under the inspiration of the Christmas thought: "How may I experience the Christ impulse within my own soul?" Alas, this thought is often a heavy burden in human hearts.

Now, my dear friends, that which we may call the Christ impulse does not become rooted in our souls in a moment, forthwith and tempestuously. In different ages it takes root differently. In our day we must take into ourselves in full, clear, waking consciousness such cosmic thoughts as have been stammeringly imparted by spiritual knowledge as guided by Anthroposophy, to which we adhere. As these thoughts are proclaimed to us — provided we truly understand them — they can awaken within us the assurance that the new revelation, the new Christ impulse of our age, truly enters into us on the wings of these thoughts. We will sense the new impulse if only we pay heed to it.

Make the endeavor, in the sense we intend, in living reality as is appropriate to our age, to take into yourselves the spiritual thoughts of the guidance of the world; seek to take them into yourselves; not as mere teaching, not merely as theory — seek to imbibe them so that they will move your souls to their very depths, warming, illuminating, permeating them — so that you shall bear them livingly within you. Seek to feel these thoughts so intensively that they shall become to you something, which seems to pass through your body into your soul and to change your very body. Seek to strip away from these thoughts all abstractions, anything theoretical. Endeavor to discover for yourself that these thoughts are such as constitute a true nourishment of the soul. Seek to discover for yourself that, with these thoughts, not merely thoughts alone enter your souls, but spiritual life coming from the spiritual world.

Enter into the most intimate inner union with these thoughts, and you will observe three things. You will observe that these thoughts gradually eliminate something from within you, which appears so dearly in human hearts in our age of the consciousness soul: that these thoughts, however they may be expressed, eliminate self-seeking from the human soul. When you begin to notice that these thoughts kill egoism, destroy the force of self-seeking, you have then, my dear friends, sensed the Christ-permeated character of spiritual thought guided by Anthroposophy.

In the second place, when you observe that, in the moment when untruthfulness approaches you anywhere in the world, no matter whether you yourself are tempted to be too careless about truth or whether untruthfulness approaches you from another direction — if you observe that in the moment when untruthfulness enters the sphere of your life, an impulse makes itself felt by you, warning you, pointing to the truth, an impulse which will not permit untruth to enter your life, always admonishing you and impelling you to hold fast to truth, then do you sense, in contrast with the life of the present day, so strongly inclined toward mere appearance, the living impulse of the Christ. No one will find it easy to lie in the presence of spiritual thoughts guided by Anthroposophy, or to lack all feeling for mere appearance and untruth. You will feel in the thoughts of the new revelation of the Christ, apart from all other knowledge, a sign pointing your way to the sense of truth. When, my dear friends, you shall have reached the point where you do not

strive for a mere theoretical understanding of spiritual science — as this is sought in relation to any other science — but when you have reached the stage where the thoughts so penetrate you that you say to yourself: “When these thoughts become intimately united with my soul, it is as if a power of conscience stood beside me admonishing me, pointing me toward truth,” then will you have found the Christ impulse in the second form.

In the third place, when you feel that something streams from these thoughts which works even into your body, but especially into your soul, overcoming sickness, making you well and vital, when you sense the rejuvenating, refreshing power of these thoughts, the adversary of illness, then will you have sensed the third part of the Christ impulse in these thoughts. For this is the goal toward which humanity strives through the new wisdom, in the new spirit — to find in the spirit itself the power to overcome self-seeking: to overcome self-seeking through love, the mere appearance of life through truth, the force of illness through health-giving thoughts which bring us into immediate unison with the harmonies of the universe, because they flow from the harmonies of the universe.

Not all that has been indicated can at present be attained, for human beings bear within them an ancient heritage. It is a mere lack of understanding when such a back-stairs politician as Christian Science twists into a caricature the thought of the healing power of the spirit. Yet, even though our ancient heritage renders it impossible for thought to become sufficiently potent at present to achieve what the human being craves thus to achieve, perhaps, from a self-seeking motive; nevertheless, thought possesses healing power. In such things human thinking is always perverted. Some one who understands these things may say to you that certain thoughts give health, and the person who hears this may at a certain time be affected by this or that illness. Indeed, my dear friends, the fact that we cannot at present be relieved of all illnesses by the mere power of thought is due to an ancient heritage. But are you able to say what illnesses would have overtaken you if you had not possessed the thoughts? Could you say that your life would have been passed in its present degree of health if you had not possessed these thoughts? In the case of a person who has applied himself to spiritual science guided by Anthroposophy and who dies at the age of forty-five years, can you prove that, without these thoughts, he would not have died at forty-two or forty

years of age? Human beings tend always to think from the wrong direction when they deal with these thoughts. They direct their attention to what cannot be bestowed upon them, by reason of their karma, but do not pay attention to what is bestowed upon them by reason of their karma. But if, in spite of everything contradictory in the external physical world, you direct your look with the power of inner confidence which you have gained through intimate familiarity with the thoughts of spiritual science, you then come to feel the healing power, a healing power which penetrates even into the physical body, refreshing, rejuvenating the third element, which the Christ as the Healer brings with his never ceasing revelations into the human soul.

We have desired to enter more deeply, my dear friends, into the thought of Christmas, which is so closely bound up with the mystery of human birth. What is revealed to us today out of the spirit as the continuing extension of the Christmas thought we desired to bring in brief outline before our minds. We can feel that it gives strength and support to our lives. We can feel that it places us amid the impulses of cosmic evolution, no matter what may befall, so that we can feel ourselves in unison with these divine impulses in the evolution of the world; that we can understand them, and can draw power for our will from this understanding, and light for our life of thought. Humanity is evolving; it would be wrong to deny this evolution. The only right course is to go forward with this evolution.

Moreover, Christ has declared: "I am with you always even to the end of the world." This is not a phrase; it is truth. Christ has revealed Himself not only in the Gospels; Christ is with us; Christ reveals Himself continually. We must have ears to harken to what He is ever newly revealing in the modern age. Weakness will overcome us if we have no faith in these new revelations; but strength shall be ours if we have such faith.

Strength will come to us if we have faith in the new revelations, even should they speak to us from life's seemingly contradictory suffering and misfortune. With our own souls we pass through repeated earth lives during which our destiny comes to fulfillment. Even this thought, which empowers us to sense the spiritual behind the external physical life, we can realize only when we take into ourselves in the truly Christian sense the revelations following one upon another. The Christian, the true

Christian, when he stands before the candles on the Christmas tree, should begin to work with the strengthening thoughts which can come to him today from the new cosmic revelation, to give power to his will, illumination to his life of thought. And his feeling should be such that the power and the light of this thought may enable him in the course of the Christian year to draw close to that other thought which admonishes us in the mystery of death, the Easter thought, which brings the final experience of our earthly life before our souls as a spiritual experience. For we shall sense the Christ more and more if we are able to place our own existence in the right relation with His existence. The medieval Rosicrucian, uniting his thought with Christianity, declared: *Ex deo nascimur; in Christo morimur; per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus*. Out of the Divine have we been born — as we contemplate ourselves as human beings here on the earthly globe. In Christ we die. In the Holy Spirit we shall be again awakened. This actually pertains to our life, our human life. If we turn our look away from our life to the life of Christ, then what is represented in our life is a mirrored reflection. Out of the Divine are we born; in Christ we die; in the Holy Spirit we shall again be awakened. This saying, which is true of our first-born Brother, the Christ living in our midst, we can so affirm that we shall feel it to be the Christ-truth raying forth from Him and mirrored in our human nature: Out of the Spirit was He begotten, as this is represented in the Gospel of Luke in the symbol of the descending dove, out of the Spirit was He begotten; in the human body He died; in the Divine will He rise again.

We can take into ourselves, in the right way, truths, which are eternal only when we see them in their contemporary reflection — not made into something absolute, made abstract in a single form. And if we feel ourselves as human beings — not only in an abstract sense, but as human beings existing actually at a certain time when it is our duty to act and to think in harmony with this time, then shall we seek to understand the Christ, who is with us always even to the end of the world. In His contemporary language, He teaches us and gives us light regarding the Christmas thought, filling us with the power of the Christmas thought. We shall desire to take this Christ into ourselves in His new language. For the Christ must become intimately related to us. Then shall we be enabled to fulfill in ourselves the true mission of Christ on the earthly globe and beyond death. The human being in each epoch must take the Christ into him or herself in their own way. This has been the feeling of human beings when they have looked in the right way at the two

great pillars of the spirit: at the Christmas thought and the Easter thought. Thus did the profound German mystic, the Silesian, Angelus Silesius, contemplating the Christmas thought, declare:

*Should Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
And not in thee, then wert thou still forlorn.*

And, contemplating the Easter thought, he said:

*The cross of Golgotha must be upraised in thee
Ere from thy sin its power shall make thee free.*

Truly the Christ must live within us, since we are not human beings in an absolute sense, but human beings of a definite epoch. The Christ must be born within us according to the sound of His words in our epoch. We must seek to bring the Christ to birth within us, for our strengthening, for our illumination, as He has remained with us until now, as He will remain with humankind throughout all ages even to the end of earthly time, as He wills now to be born in our souls. That is, if we seek to experience the birth of Christ within us in our epoch, as this event becomes a light and a power in our souls — the eternal power and eternal life entering into time — we then behold in the true way the historic birth of Christ in Bethlehem and its counterpart in our own souls.

*Should Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
And not in thee, then wert thou still forlorn.*

As He creates the impulse in our hearts today to look upon His birth, His birth in human events, His birth in our own souls, so do we deepen the Christmas thought within us. And then we look away to that night of consecration which we ought to feel coming to pass within us, for the strengthening and illumination of human beings, for the endurance of many evils and sorrows, which they have had to live through and will yet have to live through.

"My Kingdom," said Christ, "is not of this world." It is a saying which challenges us, if we look upon His birth in the right way, to find within ourselves the path to

the Kingdom where He abides to give us strength, where He abides to give us light amid our darkness and helplessness through the impulses coming from the world of which He himself spoke, of which His appearance on Christmas will always be a manifestation. "My Kingdom is not of this world." But He has brought that Kingdom into this world, so that we may always find strength, comfort, confidence, and hope out of this Kingdom in all the circumstances of life, if we only will come to Him, taking His words to heart — such words as these:

"Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom." ❖

◆ From *BACKGROUND TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1968, Lecture 9, "The Moon-Religion of Jahve and its Reflection in Arabism, The Penetration of the Buddha-Mercury Stream into Rosicrucianism," pp. 146-165.

Today, for the time being, we shall be bringing to a close this winter's rather disconnected studies of St. Mark's gospel. The passages quoted in the last lecture, to the effect that we are living in a period of transition, are the key to the ideas with which we have been particularly concerned. On even a superficial consideration of spiritual life, we must admit that thoughts and ideas of a new kind are emerging — although individuals living in the very midst of this new order hardly realize it themselves. It will be a good thing if we can take away material for thought which will help us to carry our ideas further, so this evening I want to give certain suggestions which will enable you to elaborate the spiritual scientific knowledge already communicated to you.

When we refer to a period of transition, it is well to remind ourselves of the greater epochs of transition in the evolution of humanity and particularly of the crucial point reached in the events in Palestine. From much that has been said we know the significance of that time. When we try to form some conception of how the supremely important idea, the Christ-Idea, arose out of thoughts and feelings of the immediately preceding period, we must remember that the Jahve, or Jehovah-Idea meant as much to the ancient Hebrews as the Christ-Idea meant to those who became His followers. From other lectures, we also know that for those who penetrate deeply into the essence of Christianity, the Being Jahve or Jehovah is not to be distinguished from Christ Himself. We must clearly understand that there is an intimate relationship between the Jahve-Idea and the Christ-Idea.

It is difficult to summarize in a few words the vast aspects of the relationship. The subject has been elaborated in many lectures and lecture-courses in recent years, but I can illustrate it by a picture. I need only remind you again of the picture of the sunlight which can come to us either direct from the sun or by reflection at night from the moon, especially at full moon. After all, it is sunlight that comes from the full moon, even if it is reflected sunlight, and this does indeed differ from sunlight directly received. If we think of Christ as symbolized by the direct sunlight, we may liken Jahve to sunlight reflected by the moon; that would represent the

exact sense in which the two ideas should be understood. Those who are to some extent conversant with this subject regard the transition from a temporary reflection of Christ in Jahve into Christ Himself just as they think of the difference between sunlight and moonlight: Jahve is an indirect and Christ a direct revelation of the same Being.

Thinking in terms of evolution, however, we must picture what is side by side in space as successive in time. Those who speak of these things from the point of view of occultism will say: If we call the religion of Christ a sun religion — and there are good grounds for this expression if we recall what was said about Zarathustra — we may call the Jahve religion a moon religion — the transitory reflection of the Christ-Religion. Thus in the period preceding the birth of Christianity, the sun religion was prepared for by a moon religion. You will only be able to understand what I am now going to say if you realize that symbols are not chosen arbitrarily but have deep foundations. When a world conception or world religion is associated with a symbol, those who use the symbol with adequate knowledge are aware that it is intimately and essentially connected with what it represents. People today have in many ways lost sight of the symbol of moonlight for the old Jahve religion and to some extent also of the symbol of the sun for Christianity.

You will remember how I have described the course of the evolution of humanity. First it is a descent, beginning when the human being was driven out of the spiritual world and sank more and more deeply into matter. And if we picture the general path of evolution, we can think of the lowest point as having been reached at the time of the Christ-Impulse, after which the descent was transformed gradually into an ascent. The Christ-Impulse began to have its effect at the lowest point and will continue to work until the earth has achieved its mission.

Now evolution is a very complicated process, and certain aspects of it are continuations of impulses given in earlier times. The Christ-Impulse given at the beginning of our era will go straight forward, becoming more and more powerful in the souls of human beings until the goal of human evolution is reached — when, from human souls, it will influence the whole of life on the earth. All later history will be evidence of the development and influence of this impulse at a higher and more perfect stage. Many such impulses work in the world in the same

way. But there are also other impulses and factors in evolution that cannot be said to advance in a straight line. Some of them have already been mentioned. In post-Atlantean evolution we have distinguished seven epochs: the Old Indian, then in sequence, the Old Persian, the Egypto-Chaldean, the Greco-Latin — during which the Christ event took place — and our own fifth epoch, which will be followed by two others. In the fifth epoch, certain happenings characteristic of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch are repeated in a different form. The Christ-Impulse was given in the middle epoch (the fourth) and the third epoch is in a certain sense repeated in the fifth. There is a similar relationship between the sixth and second epochs and between the seventh and first. Here we are concerned with overlapping factors of evolution, which will reveal themselves in such a way that we can apply to them the Biblical saying: "The first shall be last." The Old Indian epoch will reappear in the seventh in a different but nevertheless recognizable form.

There is, however, still another way in which an earlier epoch may have an effect in a later one. Shorter periods may also occur in the course of evolution. Thus conditions present in pre-Christian times during the period of ancient Hebrew culture reappeared later in post-Christian times: something that was prepared within the Jahve or Jehovah religion, overlapping the Christ Impulse as it were, appeared again and played into the other factors which had by then developed.

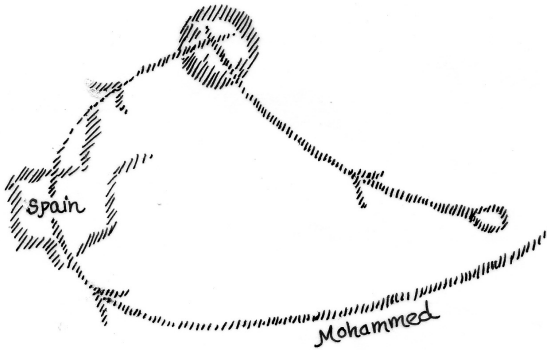
If, then, we try to describe by means of a symbol what pressure of time prevents our discussing adequately today, we may say: Taking the Moon, contrasted with the Sun, as the symbol representing the Jahve-religion, we may expect that a similar form of belief, by-passing as it were the Christ-Impulse, would emerge later on as a kind of Moon religion. And this is what actually happened. The old Jahve-religion emerged again after the Christ event, in the Religion of the Crescent, carrying earlier impulses into post-Christian times.

If you do not take things superficially, the use of the moon and crescent as symbols for these two faiths will not be something to smile at, for it is an actual fact that a religion or creed and its symbol are intimately connected. So, in a later time, we have the repetition of an earlier phase, which has skipped the intervening years. This takes place in the last third of the Greco-Latin epoch, which in the occult sense we reckon as lasting up to the twelfth and into the thirteenth century. Leaving out

a period of six hundred years, this means that beginning in the sixth century A.D. and exercising a very vigorous influence upon all aspects of development, we have the religion brought by the Arabians from Africa over into Spain: this represents a re-emergence, in a different form, of the Jahve-Moon-religion. The intervening Christ-Impulse has been ignored. It is not possible to enumerate all the characteristics brought over with the religion of Mohammed; but it is important to realize that the Christ-Impulse disregarded in the religion of Islam, which was actually a kind of revival of Mosaic monotheism. This idea of the One God, however, included a good deal derived from other sources, for instance from Egypto-Chaldean religion, which had yielded very exact knowledge of the connection of happenings in the starry heavens with earthly events. Thus the thoughts and ideas current among the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Babylonians and Assyrians appear again in the religion of Mohammed but pervaded by the One God, Jahve.

Speaking scientifically, what we have in Arabism is a kind of gathering-together, a synthesis, of the wisdom-teachings of the priests of Egypt and Chaldea and the Jahve-religion of the ancient Hebrews. In such a process there is not only compression but also rejection and elimination. In this case everything connected with clairvoyant perception had to be discarded, and human beings were to depend entirely upon reason and intellectual thinking. Hence, the concepts belonging to the Egyptian art of healing and to Chaldean astronomy — which in both these peoples were the outcome of clairvoyance — are to be found in the Arabism of Mohammed in an intellectualized and individualized form. Something that had passed as it were through a filter was thus brought into Europe by the Arabians. Old concepts that had been current among the Egyptians and Chaldeans were denuded of their visionary, pictorial content and re-cast into abstract forms. They reappear in the wonderful scientific knowledge possessed by the Arabians who made their way into Europe via Africa and Spain. Whereas Christianity brought an impulse connected essentially with the human life of soul, the greatest impulse given to the human intellect was brought by the Arabians. Without thorough knowledge of the course taken by the evolution of humanity, it is impossible to form any idea of how much the world-conception which arose in a new form, under the symbol of the moon, has given to humankind. There could have been no Kepler, no Galileo, without the impulses brought by Arabism into Europe. For the old mode

of thinking appears again, but now denuded of its ancient clairvoyance, when the third cultural-epoch celebrated its resurrection in our own fifth epoch, in our modern astronomy, in our modern science.



Thus the course of evolution is such that, on the one hand, the Christ-Impulse penetrates into the European peoples directly through Greece and Italy, and on the other hand, a more southerly stream by-passes Greece and Italy and unites with the influences brought indirectly by the Arabians.

Only through the union of Christianity and Mohammedanism during the important period with which we are dealing, was it possible for our modern culture to come into being. For reasons, which I cannot go into today, we have to reckon with periods of six to six and a half centuries for such impulses as I have been describing. Thus, actually, six centuries after the Christ event, the renewed moon-cult of the Arabians appears, expanding and spreading into Europe, and until the thirteenth century, enriching the Christian culture, which had received its direct impulses by other paths. There was an unbroken interchange of thought. If you are conversant merely with the outer course of events, if you know how in the monasteries of western Europe — in spite of apparent opposition to Arabism — the Arabian concepts made their way into science, you will also be aware that until the middle of the thirteenth century — again a particularly significant point of time — the Arabian-Impulse and the direct Christ-Impulse were interwoven. From this, you will gather that the direct Christ-Impulse actually moved along paths different from those taken by the impulses that streamed in like tributaries to unite with it.

Six centuries after the Christ-Event, as a result of happenings that are not easy to characterize — although they are well known to every occultist — a new wave of culture arose in the east, and made its way via Africa and Spain into the spiritual life of Europe and united with the Christ-Impulse. We can therefore say that the sun and moon symbols merged into each other from the sixth/seventh century up to the twelfth/thirteenth century, again a period of some six hundred years.

After this process of cross-fertilization had in a certain respect achieved its goal, something new arose which had been in preparation since about the twelfth or thirteenth century. It is interesting that today, even orthodox science recognizes that something inexplicable passed through the souls of Europeans at that time. Science considers it inexplicable, but occultism knows that in this period, as though it were following the Christ-Impulse, something yielded by the fourth post-Atlantean epoch poured, spiritually, into the souls of human beings: the fruits of Greek culture constituted a following wave. We call this period the Renaissance. It was the culture, which, during the next centuries, enriched everything already in existence. Here again, there was an overlapping after a period of six hundred years since the influx of Arabism. At this point in evolution, the age of Greece — which was a kind of centre among the seven post-Atlantean epochs — underwent a certain renewal in the Renaissance. Then again, there is a period of six hundred years, during which the Greek wave reaches its culmination; this brings us to the period in which we ourselves are living. We are living today at the beginning of a period of transition before the onset of the next six-hundred-year wave of culture, when something entirely new is pressing in upon us, when the Christ-Impulse is to be enriched by something new.

After the Moon-culture underwent its revival in the religion symbolized by the Crescent and had reached its conclusion during the period of the Renaissance, the time has now come when the Christ-Impulse must receive into itself another tributary stream. With this tributary stream our own age has a particular affinity. But we must clearly understand what the influx of this new stream means to our own culture. All these happenings are entirely in accordance with an occult plan — we could also say, an occult purpose. If we think of moon, mercury, venus and sun in the old, not the new sequence, we should expect, after the renewal of the moon-influence had reached its culmination during the Renaissance, the influx of

another stream, to which we could legitimately assign the symbol of mercury. If our symbolism is correct, just as we called the wave of Arabism a moon-culture, so we might say theoretically that we now face the prospect of an influx of a form of mercury-culture.

If we understand the way in which culture and civilization have developed, we may justifiably name Goethe as the last great individual to combine in his soul the full fruits of science as an intellectualism enriched by Arabism, Christianity, and of Renaissance culture. We should therefore expect him to represent a glorious union of the three domains, and having studied Goethe as we have been doing for years, we can easily recognize that these elements do indeed flow together in his soul. But after what has been said about the cycles of six hundred years, we should not expect to find in Goethe any trace of the mercury-influence; we should expect it to appear as something new only after his time. And here it is interesting to note that Goethe's pupil, Schopenhauer, already reveals signs of this new influence. I have said that Schopenhauer's philosophy contains elements of eastern wisdom, particularly in the form of Buddhism. Mercury has always been regarded as the symbol of Buddhism. So, after the age of Goethe, there was a revival of the Buddha-Influence — Buddha standing for mercury and mercury for Buddha — in the same way as the moon influence reappeared in Arabism. This side-stream, which flowed into the direct Christ-Impulse at the beginning of a new six-hundred-year period, can therefore be described within the limits indicated in my public lecture on the subject as a revival of Buddhism.

We can now ask: Which is the stream of culture that flows straight forward into the future? It is the Christ-Stream. And what side-streams are there? Firstly there is the Arabian-Stream, which flows into the main current, then has a pause, and finally passes into the culture of the Renaissance. At the present time, a renewed influx of the Buddha-Stream is taking place. If we are able to see these things in the right light it will become evident that we have to absorb those elements of the Buddha-Stream, which were not hitherto present in western culture. And we can see how certain elements of the Buddha-Stream are actually making their way into the spiritual development of the west — for instance, the teaching of reincarnation and karma. But there is something else that we must impress firmly upon our minds and it is this: none of these side-streams will ever be able to throw light on

the central fact of our world-conception, of our Spiritual Science. To expect from Buddhism or any other pre-Christian oriental religion undergoing revival in our time, any illumination on the nature of Christ would be no more intelligent than for European Christians to have expected this of the Arabians who had spread into Spain. The people of Europe at that time knew very well that the Christ-Idea was foreign to the Arabians, that the Arabians could say nothing essential about the Christ. And when they did say anything, the ideas put forward were incompatible with the true Christ-Idea. The various prophets down to Sabbatai Zewi, who appeared as false Messiahs without any understanding whatever of the Christ-Impulse, all sprang from Arabism. Obviously, therefore, the contribution of this Arabian side-stream consisted of quite different elements; it could shed no light on the central mystery of the Christ.

Our attitude to the stream that is approaching today as a side-current must be the same. It is a revival of an older stream, and will promote understanding of reincarnation and karma, but cannot possibly bring any elucidation of the Christ impulse. That would be as absurd as if the Arabians, although they were able to bring to Europeans many ideas through false Messiahs up to the time of Sabbatai Zewi, had set about giving Europe a true idea of Christ. Such occurrences will be repeated, for the evolution of humankind can go forward only if we are strong enough to see through these things with greater and greater clarity.

What we shall find is that the Spiritual Science, founded by European Rosicrucianism, with Christ as its central idea, will establish itself despite external obstacles and penetrate into the hearts of human beings in defiance of all temptations from outside. From my book, *Esoteric Science, an Outline*, you can gather how the central Christ-Idea must penetrate into human souls, how the Christ is interwoven with the evolution not only of humanity, but of the whole world, and you will be able to recognize along which path progress will be made. The possibility of following this onward march of Spiritual Science will be within reach of everyone who understands the words from the gospel of St. Mark quoted at the end of the last lecture: "False Christs and false prophets will appear. . . when men say to you: 'Lo, here is the Christ, Lo, there,' believe them not!" But beside this stream there is another, claiming to be better informed than western Rosicrucian Spiritual Science about the nature of Christ.

This other stream will introduce all kinds of ideas and dogmas, which will develop quite naturally out of the side-stream of oriental Buddhism. But western souls would be showing the worst kind of feebleness if they failed to understand that the Buddha, or mercury stream has as little light to throw on the direct development of the Christ-Idea as Arabism had in its time. What I am saying now is not the outcome of any special belief, dogma or fantasy; it emerges from the objective course of world-evolution. If you wanted to follow this up, I could prove by figures or by the trends of culture that things will inevitably be as occult science teaches, but in connection with all this a distinction must be made.

On the one hand, there is orthodox, oriental Buddhism in its original form. The attempt might be made to transplant this as a fixed and unalterable system into Europe and to produce out of it an idea, a conception of Christ. On the other hand, there is Buddhism that has progressed to further stages of development. There will be people who will tell you to think of the Buddha just as he was some five or six hundred years before our era, and of the doctrines he then promulgated. But compare this with what Rosicrucian Spiritual Science has to say. It will say: The fault lies with you, not with the Buddha, that you talk as if Buddha had come to a standstill at the point it had attained all those centuries ago. Do you imagine that Buddha has not progressed?

When you speak as you do, you are speaking of teaching that was right for his epoch. But we look to the Buddha who has moved onwards and from spiritual realms exercises an enduring influence upon human culture. We contemplate the Buddha as described in our studies of St. Luke's gospel, whose influence streamed down upon the Jesus of the Nathan line of the House of David; we contemplate the Buddha at the further stage of his development in the realm of the spirit, who proclaims from there the truths of basic importance for our time.

Something strange has happened in dogmatic Christianity in the west. By a curious concatenation of circumstances, a Buddha-like figure has appeared among the Christian saints. You will remember that I once spoke of a legend current all over Europe in the Middle Ages, namely, the legend of Barlaam and Josaphat. Its content was more or less as follows. There was once an Indian King who had a son. In his early years, far removed from all human misery and life in the outer world,

the son was brought up in the royal palace, where he saw only conditions making for human happiness and well-being. Josaphat was his name, though it has been frequently changed and has assumed several different forms — Josaphat, Judasaph, Budasaph.

Until a certain age, Josaphat lived in his father's palace, knowing nothing about the world outside. Then, one day he was led out of the palace and came to know something of the world. First of all he saw a leper, then a blind man, then an old man. Thereafter he met a Christian hermit by the name of Barlaam, who converted him to Christianity.

You will not fail to recognize in this legend clear echoes of the legend of Buddha. He too was an Indian king's son who lived isolated from the world, was later led out of the palace and saw a leper, a blind man and an old man. But you will notice that in the Middle Ages something was added that cannot be attributed to Buddha, namely, that Josaphat allowed himself to be converted to Christianity. This could not have been said of Buddha. The legend evoked a certain response among individual Christians, particularly among those who were responsible for drawing up the Calendar of the Saints.

It was known that the name Josaphat, Judasaph, Budasaph, is directly connected with Bodhisattva. So here we have evidence of a remarkable connection of a Christian legend with the figure of Buddha. We know that according to the eastern legend, Buddha passed into Nirvana, having, handed on the Bodhisattva's crown to his successor, now a Bodhisattva, and will subsequently become the Maitreya Buddha of the future. Buddha is presented to us in legend, in the figure of Josaphat; and the union of Buddhism with Christianity is wonderfully indicated by the fact that Josaphat is included among the saints. Buddha was held to be so holy that in the legend he was converted to Christianity, and from being the son of an Indian king could rightly be included among the saints — although from another side this has been disputed. From this you will see that it was known where the later form of Buddhism, or rather of the Buddha, was to be sought.

In hidden worlds, the union has meanwhile taken place between Buddhism and Christianity. Barlaam is the mysterious figure who brings Christianity to the

knowledge of the Bodhisattva. Consequently if we trace the course of Buddhism as an enduring stream in the sense indicated in the legend, we can accept it only in the changed form in which it now appears. If through clairvoyant insight we understand the inspirations of the Buddha, we must speak of him as he actually exists today. Just as Arabism was not Judaism and the Jahve-Moon-Religion did not reappear in Arabism in its original form, neither will Buddhism, to the extent to which it can enrich western culture, appear in its old form. It will appear in an altered form, because what comes later never appears as a mere replica of the earlier.

These are brief, disconnected remarks, intended to stimulate thought about the evolution of humanity, and you can elaborate them for yourselves. If you will take everything you can discover in the way of historical knowledge and follow the development of Europe from the spiritual-scientific point of view, you will see clearly that we have now reached the point where a fusion of Christianity and Buddhism will take place, just as in the case of the Jahve-Religion and Christianity. Test this by whatever European historians can tell you: but test it by taking all the facts into consideration. You will then find confirmation of everything I have said, although it would be necessary to talk for weeks if we were to speak of all that the Rosicrucian Movement in Europe can contribute.

Nor is it only in history that you can find proof of these things. If you set about it rightly, you will find proof in modern natural science and allied fields. If you seek in the right way, you will find that everywhere the new ideas are thrusting their way into the present; old ideas are becoming useless and are disappearing. In a certain respect our thinkers and investigators are working with outworn concepts because the great majority of them are incapable of assimilating ideas and concepts contributed by the new cultural side stream, particularly on the subject of reincarnation and karma, as well as all the other contributions that Spiritual Science can make. Our scientists are working with concepts that have become useless. If you look through the literature of any field of science, you will realize how heart-breaking it often is for scholars, that current concepts are quite unable to elucidate the innumerable facts that are constantly coming to light.

There is one concept — I can only touch on these things today — which still plays an important part in the whole range of science: it is the concept of heredity. The

concept of heredity as it figures in the different sciences and in common usage is simply useless. Facts themselves will force people to recognize the need for concepts other than the useless one of heredity as currently accepted in many fields of science. It will become evident that certain facts already known today in regard to the heredity of human beings and related creatures can be understood only when quite different concepts are available.

When speaking today of heredity in successive generations, we seem to believe that all a person's faculties can be traced back in a direct line through his or her immediate ancestors. But it is the concept of reincarnation and karma alone that will make it possible for clarity to replace the present confusion in this field of thought. Again, I cannot go into detail, but it will become evident that a great deal in human nature as we know it today is entirely unconnected with the influence of the sexes; nevertheless, a confused science still teaches that everything in the human being originates at the time of conception, through the union of male and female. But it is simply not true that everything in the human being is in some way connected with what takes place in direct physical manifestation in the union of the sexes. You will have to think this out more closely for yourselves; I only want what I have said to be a suggestion.

The human physical body, as you know, has a long history. It has passed through a Saturn Period, a Sun Period, a Moon Period, and is now passing through the Earth Period. The influence of the astral body began only during the Moon Period but naturally produced a change in the physical body. Hence, the physical body does not appear to us today in the form imparted to it by the forces of the Saturn Epoch and the Sun Epoch, but in the form resulting from those forces combined with the forces of the astral body and the I. It is only those components of the physical body which are connected with the influence of the astral body on the physical body which can be inherited as the result of the union of the sexes; whereas, whatever in the physical body is subject to laws going back to the Saturn and Sun Periods has nothing to do with the sexes. One part of human nature is received directly from the macrocosm and not from the union of the sexes.

This means that what we bear within us does not all spring from the union of the sexes; only that which depends upon the astral body springs from that union. A

large part therefore of our human nature is received, for example, by way of the mother, directly from the macrocosm and not by the roundabout way of union with the other sex.

We must therefore distinguish in human nature, one part that originates from the union of the sexes and another part that is received by way of the mother directly from the macrocosm. There can be no clarity in these matters until a definite and precise distinction is made between the individual members of human nature, whereas today everything is mingled together in confusion. The physical body is not a self-contained, isolated entity; it is formed through the combined workings of the etheric body, the astral body and the I; and again we must distinguish between the forces that are due to the direct influence of the macrocosm and others that are to be ascribed to the union of the sexes.

But from the paternal organism too, something is received that again has nothing whatever to do with the union of the sexes. Certain laws and organs in no way based upon heredity are implanted direct from the macrocosm through the maternal organism; others come from the macrocosm by spiritual channels through the paternal organism. Of what is received by way of the maternal organism we may say that this organism is the focus through which it is transmitted; but this combines with something that again is not derived from sexual union but from the father. A macro-cosmic process thus takes place and comes to expression in the bodily members and forms. Consequently, when speaking of the development of the human embryo, it is completely misleading to base everything upon heredity, when in actual fact certain elements are received direct from the macrocosm. Here, then, we have a case in our own times where the facts themselves far outstrip the concepts at the disposal of science, for these concepts originated in an earlier epoch.

You may ask: Is there any evidence to confirm this? Popular literature has little to say, but occultism is absolutely clear about it. And here I should like to draw your attention to something of which, however, I can give no more than a hint. A remarkable contrast between two naturalists of the modern age has attracted widespread attention and has influenced other thinkers to a very considerable extent. The characters of the two naturalists are very relevant here. On the one side there is Haeckel. Because Haeckel applies ancient concepts to his really wonderful

collection of facts and data, he traces everything to heredity and bases the whole development of the embryo upon it. On the other side there is His , the zoologist and scientist, who keeps very closely to the facts as such, and because of this might possibly be accused, with a certain justification, of doing too little thinking. Because of the particular way in which he investigated his facts, he was bound to oppose the concept of heredity as propounded by Haeckel, and he pointed out that certain organs and organic structures in the human being can be explained only if the view that they originate from the union of the sexes is discarded. To this, Haeckel mockingly retorted that he was attributing the origin of the human being to a virginal influence, independent of any sexual union! But, as a matter of fact, this is quite correct. Scientific facts more or less compel us today to admit that what can be attributed to the union of the sexes must be distinguished from what comes direct from the macrocosm, which wide circles of people nowadays naturally regard as absurd. So you can see that even in the field of natural science we are being driven towards new concepts. The present phase of evolution makes it evident that to have a genuine grasp of the facts presented by science we must acquire many new concepts, and that those inherited from past ages no longer suffice.

From what I have said you will realize that a tributary stream must flow into our present culture. This is the Mercury-Stream, the existence of which proclaims itself in the fact that those undergoing occult development as described in many of our lectures grow into the spiritual world, and in so doing, experience new facts and realities. This penetration into another world may be compared with the way in which a fish is transferred from water into the air but must first have prepared itself by turning its gills into lungs. Similarly, a human being whose faculty of sense perception is developing into spiritual perception will have made his or her soul capable of using certain forces in a different element. The very atmosphere nowadays is saturated with thoughts which make it necessary for us to have a genuine grasp of the new facts of science becoming evident on the physical plane. The spiritual investigator can penetrate into the real nature of the facts that press in upon him from all sides. This is due to the appearance of the new stream of which I have been speaking. Thus, wherever we look, we find that we are living in an extraordinarily important epoch, in times when it will be impossible for life to progress unless revolutionary changes take place in human thinking and perception.

I said that human beings must learn to live in a new element in the same way that a fish, accustomed to living in water, would have to find its way into the new element of air. But they must be able, in their thinking too, to penetrate to the real nature of the facts produced on the physical plane. If they stand out against this new thinking they will be in the same position as fish taken out of the water; later on they will literally be gasping for spiritual concepts. Those who want to retain the monism of today are like fish that might prefer to exchange their watery for an airy habitation, but at the same time want to keep their gills. Only those human souls who so transform their faculties that a new conception of present facts is within their reach will grasp what the future has in store. So we find ourselves living, but now with full understanding, at a point where two streams converge. The first stream should give us a deeper understanding of the Christ problem and the Mystery of Golgotha. The other should inaugurate new ideas and concepts of reality. The two streams must converge in our time. But this will not happen without great hindrances being encountered; for in periods when two such streams of thought and outlook converge, all kinds of obstructions arise. And in a certain sense it is the adherents of Spiritual Science who will find it particularly necessary to understand these facts.

Some of our members might counter the exposition I have been giving here, by saying: What you have told us is very difficult to understand and we shall have to work at it for a long time. Why do you not give us something more readily digested, which convinces us of the spirituality of the world and makes a greater appeal? Why do you expect so much of our understanding of the world? How much pleasanter it would be if we could believe what Buddhism, transmitted exactly as it was at the beginning, can tell us: that we need not think of the Christ event as the single point on which the scales of world-evolution hinge and that there can be no repetition of it. It would be so much easier to think that a being such as the Christ incarnates again and again like other human beings. Why do you not say that here or there this being will come again in the flesh — instead of saying that we must make ourselves capable of experiencing a renewal of what happened to St. Paul at the gate of Damascus? For if you told us that there will be an incarnation of the Christ-Being in the flesh, we could say: "Behold, he is here! We can see him with physical eyes!" That would be so very much easier to understand. Plenty of people will see to it that this kind of thing is said.

But it is the mission of western Spiritual Science to make known the truth — the truth which takes full account of all the factors responsible for the progress of evolution to this day. Those who look for comfort and ease in the spiritual world will have to seek for spirituality along other paths. The truth needed for our times is that to which we must apply all the intellectual capacity acquired since the fading of the old clairvoyance, and this must carry us on until the dawn of the new clairvoyance. And I am sure that those who understand the nature of this intellectual capacity in the form necessary for today will follow the path indicated in the words I have spoken here now, and so often before. It is not a matter of saying in what form we wish to have the truth but of knowing from the whole course of human evolution in a given epoch, how, at a particular point of time, the truth must be proclaimed. You may be sure that plenty of other things will be said, and you must not be unprepared for them. Consequently, in Rosicrucian Spiritual Science, we shall not fail to draw attention again and again to the highest spiritual knowledge attainable in our time. You need never accept blindly on trust anything said here or elsewhere, for in our Movement we never appeal to blind credulity. In your own intelligence and the use of your own reason you have adequate means of testing what you hear. And remember, as you have been told so often, that you must bring the whole of life, the whole of science and the whole of your experience, to bear upon what you hear in Rosicrucian Spiritual Science.

Do not fail to put everything to the test. It is precisely where you come across incongruities, or perhaps where the truth seems to be the very opposite of what is stated, that on the ground of true spirituality blind faith cannot be allowed.

Everything based on blind faith is bound to be sterile and stillborn. It would be easy enough to build on credulity: but those who belong to the stream of western spiritual life refuse to do this. They build instead upon what can be tested by human reason, understanding and intellect. Those in touch with the source of our Rosicrucian Spiritual Science know that whatever is said has been carefully tested. The edifice of Spiritual Science is built upon the ground of truth, not upon that of easy faith; it is upon the foundation of a thoroughly tested, though perhaps difficult truth, that we establish our Spiritual Science; and prophets of a blind and comfortable faith will not shake that foundation. ❖

◆ By Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, translated by Bernard S. Greenberg

As they grazed their flock, the shepherds
bore the angel's salutation
through the lowly portal, onward
to the Mother and her Child.
Hosts of Heaven led the hymn,
through the starry spheres resounding,
Heaven led the song proclaiming,
"Peace, O Peace upon the Earth!"

Since that time of angels, warning
O how many deeds so bloody
has that armored horseman, Conflict,
on his wild horse brought forth!
On how many a holy night
sang the choir of spirits quaking,
pressingly yet softly pleading,
"Peace, O Peace upon the Earth!"

Yet survives belief eternal
that the weak shall not forever
fall as helpless victim to each
murd'ers, fresh indignity.
Righteousness, or something kin,
weaves and works in rout and horror,
and a kingdom yet shall rise up
seeking Peace upon the Earth.

Slowly shall its form develop,
holy duties while fulfilling,
weapons free of danger forging,
flaming swords for cause of Right.
And a royal line shall bloom
mighty royal sons shall flourish,
whose bright trumpets peal proclaiming,
Peace, O Peace upon the Earth! ❖

◆ From *VERSES AND MEDITATIONS*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1979, p.64.

Asleep in the soul of Earth
 In Summer's heat,
 While the Sun's outward Glory
 Rays through the realms of Space.

Awake is the soul of Earth
 In winter's cold,
 While the Sun's inmost Being
 Lightens in Spirit.

Summer's day of joy
 For Earth is sleep.
 Winter's holy night
 For earth is day. ❖

New Year's Eve and the Holy Nights

◆ Herbert Hahn reports the following words by Steiner:

The twelve holy nights are decisive for the life and destiny of the whole ensuing year. A seed for our accomplishments can be formed at that time. It is especially important to form intentions on New Year's Eve. During that night, our folkspirit leaves us free for a few moments. What we think then is grasped by the highest hierarchies — and it carries within it the power of fulfillment. ❖

◆ Translated by Jan Kees Saltet

*Heaven humbles itself, toward earth makes its descent;
When will the earth arise and become heaven-bent!*

*Were Christ to be born a thousand times in Bethlehem
And not in you, then forever lost you must remain.*

*In a manger dwelt in your heart's deep core,
God could become a child on earth once more.*

*When God's spirit touches you true,
The child of eternity will be born in you.*

*God became man for you; may you become God in turn,
Lest His birth you scorn and His death you spurn.*

*The true son of God is Christ alone,
but all Christians in Christ are one. ❖*

◆ After an Old French Legend, as told by Dr. Helmut von Kügelgen.

Translated by Philomela Wyble.

It happened at the hour of midnight of the Holy Night in the stable in Bethlehem. Maid Mary had just given birth to the child. She wrapped him for the first time and laid him into a manger in which Joseph had laid straw. He then quietly moved the crib near Mary's resting place. For the protection of the child, she drew her blue mantle halfway over the crib. The ox and ass barely moved in their corner. Quiet light shimmered in their big eyes.

Suddenly, the door opened, as if a strong puff of air had pushed upon it. A figure in a gray blowing mantle stood on the threshold. She looked completely earth-gray: gray was the cloth that covered her head and wrapped her face in shadow; gray was her shoulder cloth, which hung down to the ground. Mary was frightened, and pressed her hands upon her heart. Slowly, deeply bent, as if from carrying an old burden, the ancient woman approached. Did she want to harm the child at whom she looked so steadfastly? But the ox and ass looked at the stranger as if she was long familiar to them. The child slumbered undisturbed. Only Mary was worried; she did not let the old woman out of her eyesight. She followed her dragging steps — each felt like an eternity to her beating heart.

Finally the ancient one stood at the manger. Mary looked into the darkness of her furrowed face; only for a moment could she look into her eyes, which immediately turned to rest again upon the child. The child awakened under the gaze of the ancient one and opens his eyes. At that moment, the ancient woman bent her head over the manger. Her hand searched for something in the wide folds of her mantle, searched for something she wanted to take from it. Mary was still anxious, but the animals glanced over as if they knew from the beginning on what was going to happen.

After a long, long time, the ancient one brought forth her hand. In it, she held something that had been hidden, something that she now laid into the hand of the child. His eyes, which began to shine, seemed to Mary as if they were somehow the same eyes as those that looked at her from the face of the ancient one. Now Mary was only able to see the bent back of the ancient one — which bent itself even

further — and the peacefully glowing eyes of the child. What was this first gift for the child? Mary could not see it from where she sat, but the ox and ass could see what it was. They were not surprised.

Finally, the figure stood up, as if freed from a heavy weight, which until now had bent her down to the earth. Her shoulders no longer carried the burden of this weight; her raised head almost touched the ceiling beams. In a magical way, her face looked young; her eyes were now filled with the same radiance as those of the child. She turned towards the door and disappeared into the night from which she had so suddenly come.

Now, Mary too was able to view the gift that lay in the hand of the child: It was an apple — the apple out of paradise, which Eva handed to Adam! Yes, Eva! It was she who came to bring the apple through which guilt had entered into humanity — the apple from the tree of knowledge of what is good and evil.

But in the hand of the child, this apple lit up and turned into gold. It glowed like the picture of the new world that was born with the child. In this new world, this new kingdom that came with the child, transformation now reigns through the power of love over evil.

That is the legend of the first gift. In many old pictures the child holds the apple in his hand and angels play with apples that turn into gold. And that is why emperors and kings carried golden orbs in their hands when they sat upon their thrones. By holding the golden orbs they would be emperors of this new world, able to reign in justice and in peace. ❖

◆ by Dr. Helmut von Kugelgen

Translated by Philomela Wyble.

A tall bishop figure, dressed in a long mantle of stars, with a shepherd's staff that has a spray of pine at the top enters the room. His gestures, his movements are ones of quiet dignity. He puts down a sack containing apples, gingerbread biscuits and small gifts. It will only be opened after he has left the room. Sometimes, he takes along a golden book from which he reads praise for individual children as well as advice for their improvement. The tender cleansing of their hearts with the spray of pine might, however, suffice.

This text is meant to serve as a basis or inspiration for ones own selection of words. My formulations could be used like this in the southern hemisphere of the earth, as well.

God greets you through the words of my mouth.

God greets you, you dear souls!

Over the endless meadows of the sky my soul has traveled.

As every year — as every year!

There, the stars bloom and the good moon is shining.

There, glows the deep light of the spiritual world.

And again Mary meets me,

The eternal mother of the child of God.

And she spoke to me: "Nicholas-messenger!" she says,

"Christmas shall come again on the peaceful earth.

You know, in the dark hour of midnight,

The earth night, Christ will be born again —

The child of the sky in the poverty of the earth.

A gown from the rays of the sun,

I will weave him a star gown.

It will protect him from cold and heat in the darkness of the earth."

"I traveled from star to star," thus the Holy Mother spoke to me,

"And collected rays from the sun,

Out of which to weave the gown for the Christ Child."

*"Nicholas-messenger," said the Mother Mary,
"Only one thing is missing — human love!
In the sinister, dark night of the earth,
The rays of the stars are held together
Only through love out of warm hearts!
Love out of children's hearts!
Go to the children; greet the children!
Go over the lands and over the ocean,
Through woods and over meadows of the earth,
From village to village, from city to city,
And seek, in good hearts, love from human souls.
Bring it to me, dear Nicholas-messenger,
So that the Holy Night can begin!"*

*Thus said Mary, the mother, in the starry universe, to me.
I traveled far over land and ocean,
Through woods and meadows of the earth,
From village to village, from city to city,
And sought and collected from the warmth of their hearts,
The love of the children.
I heard you sing — I saw your hearts, your loving thoughts.
I know of your willing hands,
That can give and pray.
Do I find love from you, to give
To the Christ Child — human love and love of God?
Clearly I see, that unkind thoughts
From time to time cloud your hearts.
I want to clean them, your hearts, to clean them,
(He goes around in the circle and waves the hearts clean
with the pine brush on his staff.)
Now sing me a song, a song of Christmas.*

*There the love flows from your hearts,
Which I will take to the Mother of God.*

(A song is sung, for example, the verse by Karl Schubert
composed for St.Nicholas, *OVER STARS IS MARY WANDERING.*)

*To ensure that you remember, until the Holy Night,
That human love holds together the rays of the sky,
And that Christmas can only come on earth
If the love of the human beings helps the Christ Child,
I give you this star and a light.
As the candle gives, so you, too, give
Warmth and light and love from the heart.
The star may hang over your bed.
It glows in the evening in the green pine branch
And reminds you that during Advent you should not forget,
To sing, to pray, and to give love.*

*Live well, human children,
My path still leads me until I encounter the Heavenly Mother Mary
again and say,
"Heavenly Mother, Christmas now can be on earth! Tell it to our
Heavenly Father, I found human souls on earth which listened to the
message in their hearts:
"Children love each other.
Oh, look forward to Christmas!
And let your hearts be the manger,
So child the child of the heavens
Will be born again!*

*God greets you through the words of my mouth
God greets you, you dear souls! ❖*

Gospel texts for Advent, Christmas time, Epiphany and Beyond

◆ Following passages from *THE BIBLE, KING JAMES VERSION*,
Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library

The following texts are taken from the book of pericopes contained in Studienheft No. 5 of the Kindergarten Association. They are read in the Sunday services and Offering Service of the Waldorf school movement. They are also suitable to be read by families at home. An advent text taken from the apocalyptic words on the Mount of Olives in Luke precedes the pericopes.

◆ *LUKE 21:25-33*

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. ❖

◆ MATTHEW, 21: 1-11

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. ❖

◆ MATTHEW 11:2-15

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. ❖

◆ JOHN 1:19–28

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. ❖

◆ LUKE 1: 26-38

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. ❖

◆ LUKE 2: 1-20

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 firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 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. 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, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. ❖

◆ 1 JOHN 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. ❖

◆ LUKE 2:21-35

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. ❖

◆ MATTHEW 1:18–24

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife. ❖

◆ MATTHEW 2:1-15

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. And when

they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. ❖

Epiphany – The Festival of the Appearance of Christ

The Baptism in the Jordan

◆ MATTHEW 3:15-17

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. ❖

◆ LUKE 2:41-52

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. ❖

