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In the final volume of her acclaimed trilogy *Through the Eyes of Mary Magdalene*, Estelle Isaacson intimates a connection between Magdalene and Repanse de Schoye, who lived nine centuries later in the Grail family, a sister to Anfortas, the Grail King. As the Magdalene visions ended, a new cycle began on Repanse and the Grail Family, leading to the publication in 2016 of *The Grail Bearer: Tellings From the Ever Primal Story, Through the Eyes of Repanse de Schoye*. The Knight Kyot, paladin of Charlemagne, leapt to life also in this book, whose deeper purport is a call to take up again the quest for the Holy Grail in the challenging conditions of our time. The visions, however, continued, not forward but into the past. In the present book we follow the Younger Kyot as in a forest he comes upon the Astrologer Flegetanis of the East. When that night a star above Kyot's head falls from the Heart of the Virgin into the Cup, Flegetanis reads this as a sign to commence initiating Kyot into the Lore of the Stars. Along the way, Kyot is twice saved by a strange bird of multi-colored plumage, first at the brink of a crumbling cliff, then in face of a mysterious snarling cat in the mist. In due course he makes his way to the Land of Grace, so-called for its harboring of the Holy Grail. He is introduced to two wondrous Manuscripts and *The Book That Writes Itself*, then seeks out in a cave the young Hermit Trevrizent, brother of Anfortas and

Repanse de Schoye, and grandson of the old Grail King Titurel. He reads also in *The Book With No Name*. A mysterious Maiden Petite, with oars of filigree, rows on Emerald Lake singing most wondrously. A Queen, by name Belletrieste—straddling both our world and that of the Nature Spirits—appears with shattered crown a-dangling. In her tale the Agitator and his minions rise up from a Crack in the Earth, and the Sorceress Chanzacouth, in whose Sickly Tree the Queen is trapped, would tempt Kyot to her bed. Ever and anon we hear of the Grail, o'er which keeps ward a family to it destined, and upon whom Kyot's heart is set. But first he must to Charlemagne. And ever does a Presence warm and easing guide our good Knight Kyot—the spirit of St. Odile! And more besides.... Let the story, then, be further told. "We are all part of the Grail stream. We have each a role in the Grail story that is now revealing itself further, bringing to light characters as yet unknown, or lost to memory, as well as their stories—stories that may echo in our depths and illuminate our destinies." (Quote from *The Grail Bearer: Tellings From the Ever Primal Story, Through the Eyes of Repanse de Schoye*.)

Book Announcement



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Journal for Star Wisdom 2018 includes articles of interest concerning star wisdom (Astrosophy), as well as a guide to the correspondences between stellar configurations during the life of Christ and those of today. This guide comprises a complete sidereal ephemeris and aspectarian, geocentric and heliocentric, for each day throughout the year. Published yearly, new editions are generally available beginning in October or November for the coming new year.

According to Rudolf Steiner, every step taken by Christ during his ministry between the baptism in the Jordan and the resurrection was in harmony with—and an expression of—the cosmos. *Journal for Star Wisdom* is concerned with these heavenly correspondences during the

life of Christ and is intended to help provide a foundation for cosmic Christianity, the cosmic dimension of Christianity. It is this dimension that, by and large, has been missing until now from Christianity and its the two-thousand-year history. Readers can begin on this path by

contemplating the movements of the Sun, Moon, and planets against the background of the zodiacal constellations (sidereal signs) today in relation to corresponding stellar events during the life of Christ. In this way, the possibility is opened for attuning in a living way to the life of Christ, who is now—since the onset of his Second Coming in 1933—spiritually present in the etheric aura of the Earth. In connection with the Second Coming, there is in this year's journal an article by Robert Powell concerning the Apocalypse code and the year 2018—a year during which a new relationship between the angels and humanity is beginning. This is followed by a thematically related article by Claudia McLaren Lainson on the work of the angels in the human astral body, about which Rudolf Steiner spoke one hundred years ago in 1918. Estelle Isaacson's article is titled "He Makes the Law Sweet through His Sacrifice." Connecting onto this profound contribution from the life of Christ, the second article by Claudia McLaren Lainson in this issue is "The Breaking," focusing upon the rise of new spiritual mysteries today. In this connection, a remarkable article follows, written by Joel Park, "The Cosmic Communion of Fish: The Rhythm of the New Jerusalem." In addition, Julie Humphreys wrote the excellent article "Showers of Iron: The Power of Michael," which approaches from a quite different angle the theme of new spiritual mysteries in our time, addressed in Claudia McLaren Lainson's second article. Then follows a contribution edited by Joel Park: "Classics in Astrosophy, part I," which will be continued in future issues of this journal. Finally, the monthly commentaries, supported by Julie Humphreys' astronomical previews for each month, are provided by Claudia McLaren Lainson, offering an opportunity to connect spiritually with the stellar configurations during the pivotal year of 2018. This direct interaction between the human being on Earth and the angels and other heavenly beings connected with the stars is intended to help the reader toward developing the capacity to receive the wisdom-filled teachings of the angelic hierarchies.



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The Cosmic Meaning of the Beatitudes¹

Valentin Tomberg

Thus far, we have studied the nine Beatitudes in terms of their significance for human karma; now we must ask: What is their significance for universal karma? They are bound to have such significance if humanity does, in fact, play an important role in cosmic history, and if, in addition, the Christ impulse is more than just a human matter, but a matter of cosmic history as well. We can answer this question by studying the passage directly after the ninth Beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount (as given in Matthew's Gospel). It is a kind of summary of the Sermon on the Mount, culminating in two sentences: "Ye are the salt of the earth.... Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13, 14). We learn here of the significance that those who have absorbed the Christ impulse will have for the Earth and the universe.



The Beatitudes tell us what happens to those individuals themselves and show the influence that is exercised through them in relation to objective cosmic events. They show what is below and the enlightenment of what is above. "Salt" must penetrate the Earth to give it moral "savor." "Light," however, shines upward from the Earth into the cosmos, changing the planet (as seen from the cosmos) from a dark body into a luminous one. The main objective vocation of humankind lies in these two directions—to make the Earth visible to heaven on the one hand, and on the other to thoroughly imbue the Earth with morality. The first aspect of this mission can be understood more easily by remembering that the Earth, seen from the spiritual world, appears as a dark speck in space. It glimmers only in spots where human beings cherish selfless thoughts and feelings, freed from earthly gravity and directed toward the spirit. It is these that create the moral and spiritual illumination by which earthly concerns can be seen from the spiritual world. It is just as difficult for them as it is for earthly human beings to perceive the spiritual world. If selfless spirituality did not exist on Earth, an abyss would make perception of the two worlds impossible in our present age. It is Lucifer who created this abyss, which is bridged repeatedly by nurturing selfless spirituality on Earth. That "cloud layer" of the luciferic sphere covers the Earth and casts a dark shadow from Earth into the cosmos. And a path through this cloud layer can be created only through thoughts and feelings cherished by altruistic motives. Thoughts that are spiritual but harbored in a selfish way reach only the luciferic level, where they are stopped. Considering the great number of individuals who embrace religion, mysticism, and various esoteric streams, we would expect the Earth to shine brightly nearly everywhere. The reason why this is not the case is that the motive behind it all is not selfless.

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). This sentence from the Sermon on the Mount is, in fact, addressed to the intimate Disciples of Christ Jesus. It refers to the light that, issuing from the Earth, must radiate into the cosmos and overcome the luciferic stratum. This verse refers to an altruistic spirituality. To cherish selfless spirituality is, however, impossible unless it is based

¹ Valentin Tomberg, *Christ & Sophia* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006), pp. 222-227—reproduced in *Starlight* with kind permission of SteinerBooks.

neither on personal interest nor on the interest of a special group, but is founded on the interests of all humanity. This is expressed in these words of Christ Jesus: “Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house” (Matt. 5:15).

When a spiritual life is influenced by the Christ impulse, it cannot serve a private end and is thus always the concern of community. It brings people together and unites them in an organic way. Such a community, however, must not be devoted to the goals and issues that dominate today’s ordinary human aspirations and activities. It must instead maintain a level above common practice, like that of a mountain compared to a valley. A spiritual community formed by the Christ impulse should be a “city that is set on a hill” (Matt. 5:14). It is precisely this distinction that makes it visible to the world. Its justification for existence must be the fact that it is present for all, whereas it must also rise above ordinary activities that involve power, conflict, and rivalry. Differing from the common community by shunning the principles of power, conflict, and rivalry, it becomes as visible as a city situated on a hill. An answer to the question of “exoteric and esoteric” in spiritual communities is found in the image of a city upon a hill, which “cannot be hid” because it is placed on a hill. It is its level that makes a community esoteric. It is its level that justifies the existence of such a community, and it must not be betrayed. Nonetheless, such a community becomes exoterically fruitful by being at this stage. If a selfless spiritual community is cultivated in the world only for spiritual knowledge—as pure spiritual science that does not resort to the usual methods of “demonstration,” “scientific proof,” and so on—then it completely justifies its existence as a guiding and stimulating phenomenon. Indeed, it will prove even more fruitful in the many areas of life and research by remaining true to itself and beyond the influence of those spheres. If, however, such knowledge is not cultivated for its own sake, for love of light, but instead to gain an advantage over others in science, society, culture, or some other field, such activity is no longer altruistic, and groups that work in this way no longer create the light that makes Earth visible to the spiritual world.

Kindling light that radiates into the cosmos, however, is just one side of the objective significance of the spiritual stream in humanity. The other side involves inwardly changing the Earth itself. Such a change becomes imbued with morality through its neutral activities—that is, neutral from a moral perspective. The natural processes of Earth are intrinsically neither good nor evil, but stand between the worlds of good and evil (with evil working upward from the subterranean spheres); they are open in equal parts to the influences of both worlds. As long as human beings serve two masters, nature will also serve two masters. It is the mission of humankind to place the determining weight on the scale, thus rescuing nature from its vacillation, which is experienced by nature as a disease. The cause of this disease is nature’s neutral attitude toward the conflict of the worlds. This condition is exactly like that of salt that has lost its savor and is “trodden under foot,” since it has become merely the object in the struggle between good and evil. And, up to a certain cosmic hour, those who have not yet made the decision will likewise lose the ability to decide as subjects, becoming instead merely the objects of conflict waged by others. In the future, they will form the fourth kingdom of nature, representing objects of the redemption of white magic, which will be practiced by those who have become clear. This undecided portion of humankind is the “salt that has lost its savor” and thus will no longer be an active force but an object of others’ activity.

The passage of Matthew's Gospel that mentions "salt" refers to the moral human volition that flows into events on earth. While events in the outer world enter the human organism (by means of food, for example), inner human activities similarly reach out into the events of the outer world by means of human acts. And just as the entry of the outer world into human beings can either build or destroy (depending on whether it is poison or bread), what passes from human beings to the outer world also has a constructive or a destructive effect. But what builds up in the human organism is in fact blood, the organ of the "I." The outer physical world cannot provide blood directly, but only supply the materials with which the blood can build. There is, nevertheless, a substance in the outer world that, to a certain extent, can fulfill some functions of the blood within the human organism. That substance is salt. A salt solution, introduced directly into the blood system, can correct to some degree organic disturbances caused by lack of blood.

If nature cannot provide human blood, neither can human beings provide nature the consciousness of the "I," the spiritual counterpart of blood. Nonetheless, without "I" consciousness, nature cannot gain the ability to distinguish between good and evil, and thus cannot be healed of its disease. Human beings, however, can give nature something that, in effect, approximates "I" consciousness, just as salt within the human organism effectively approximates blood. This substance is etheric life forces imbued spiritually with morality from the human "I." In fact, it is no longer life ether in the sense of natural activity, but the beginning in human beings, through the transformation of the ether forces, of a new, fifth type of ether. This new type of ether that begins in humankind was called "moral ether" by Rudolf Steiner, which expresses its nature most accurately. This moral ether, which comes into being when the Christ impulse permeates human volition and activities, is the "salt of the Earth," allowing the moral element to access nature in a way that has value for nature. The purpose of moral ether is to become an organ for the constructive influence of goodness in nature, just as salt may serve in the human organism as an organ of constructive "I" activity, which normally functions through the blood. By means of actions that express a morally awakened will and with flashes of moral ether, human beings will penetrate natural events. And the beings of nature will direct their way in harmony with those currents of moral ether, which will represent nature's conscience. Nature will then follow humankind freely—not as a slave, but as [in Grail legend] the soul of Kundry might, placing confidence in what is worthy of confidence. Kundry would thus be freed from the curse of serving two masters—Klingsor and the knights of the Grail—and be able to give herself fully to the service of the Grail.

The activity of the moral ether as nature's conscience is the secret of future white mechanical occultism. Machines will no longer rule over natural forces, but natural forces (following the moral ether of humankind) will instead become the motive force of machines. It will be human volition that will bring about the flow of moral ether—volition in which the Christ impulse lives with such power that it will have led to a realization of these words of Jesus Christ: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). Father forces are activated when human beings have permeated their will with the Christ impulse to the extent that it causes the moral ether current to flow out, just as those forces were active when the prophets of the Old Testament worked and were persecuted.

“Ye are the light of the world” refers to the conquest of Lucifer in the outer, objective world. Likewise, “Ye are the salt of the earth” refers to the struggle against Ahriman in the outer, objective world. Lucifer prevents the light of Earth from shining up into the spiritual world, and Ahriman produces darkness on Earth. Ahriman carries this spiritual, moral darkness, even into the natural realm. But this is a darkness that is dark only when seen from a spiritual perspective; from an earthly standpoint, it appears to be a certain kind of light, expressed, for example, in electricity. Indeed, Ahriman’s main weapon in nature is earthly electricity more subtle than is known to humanity today. In the conflict with Ahriman over nature, the main weapon of the beings of the spiritual world is celestial electricity. Flashes of celestial lightening often destroy and reduce to chaos the preparations of subterranean spheres that threaten nature and humanity on Earth’s surface. Many plans for evil are brought to nothing by bolts of celestial lightning, whereas nature experiences such events merely as a conflict of alternating success between two powers. Neither the earthly electrical activities of Ahriman nor the flashes of Michael’s celestial electricity are convincing in themselves to nature. Driven from one fear to another, nature sighs for redemption while rendering service first to one side and then to the other. Nature will experience only the moral ether revealed through human beings—not as power, but as a call that offers guidance and help. This kind of experience happened once before. A certain amount of the morality working in nature was revealed among the disciples of Jesus Christ after Pentecost. Certain miracles recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and by tradition can be explained only by the fact that, for a period of time, the apostles had a different relationship to nature than would otherwise have been possible during that epoch. When we read the Acts of the Apostles (*praxeis apostolon*), for instance, from the perspective of the relationship between nature and the apostles, we see that this is true. Indeed, we find that the author of the Acts stressed this to make it clear that the apostles had acquired a new kind of magic, always triumphant when in conflict with the old. The writer of the Acts seems to have made it his special task to convince readers that the moral element may affect the events of nature. Moreover, it is not incantations, talismans, amulets, and such that produced this effect, but the name of Jesus Christ and the apostles’ spiritual permeation by the Christ impulse—that is, their faith.

The two passages that mention the light of the world and the salt of the earth refer to the universal significance of what the nine Beatitudes describe as human concerns. Indeed, that significance involves the fact that the alienation between heaven and Earth caused by Lucifer can be overcome, and that enslaved nature can be led gradually to freedom by absorbing the Christ impulse. This second task, in particular, cannot be fulfilled until the distant future. “Salt” will appear increasingly active from the sixth cultural epoch, or Philadelphia, onward, but it will not become a dominating factor in natural processes (as, say, gravitation is today) until the Earth’s Jupiter incarnation. From the middle of the Jupiter evolution onward, gravitation, as such, will gradually lose its importance in nature. Consequently, gravity will no longer bind natural beings to the scene of the Jupiter events; instead, a moral force will prevent them from floating away. In fact, if natural beings remain faithful to the Jupiter planet, they will affect the moral ether. The moral force of confidence will keep them from floating away, not the compulsion of gravity, which will no longer exist on Jupiter.

In finishing our meditation on the nine Beatitudes, we have taken a step toward recognizing the work of Jesus Christ through his Word. The nine Beatitudes represent the human path to the Son. The next step involves studying the path that leads through the Son to the Father. This step involves the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer as given by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. These petitions show the relationship through which human beings can come to the Father, so long as they have united (in the sense of the nine Beatitudes) with the Son. We can understand the relationship between the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer in a deeper sense by using these words of Jesus Christ as a key: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). This gives us the inner connecting thread that leads from the Beatitudes to the Lord's Prayer. In a very deep sense, the Lord's Prayer is a sequel to the revelation given in the Beatitudes; therefore, the next meditation will consider the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

Cataclysmic Events—Tribulation—What Can We Do?

Robert Powell

The following words of Jesus relate to the time of *tribulation*, which as the subsequent text of this passage reveals, is also the time of Christ's second coming:

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.... Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.... For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened." (Matthew 24:3-8, 12-16, 21-22)

In this issue of *Starlight* we shall find mention of the Great American Solar Eclipse that took place on August 21, 2017. Many of those who experienced the eclipse have spoken of it as an extraordinary and blessed experience. No doubt on a spiritual level it was. However, it is worthwhile to consider these words of Rudolf Steiner: "Under normal circumstances human beings' *negative will* streams out into cosmic space and, in a certain way, is incinerated by the Sun's rays, so that it causes damage *only* to the human beings themselves and not to the cosmos.

At the time of an eclipse of the Sun, however, an opportunity is given for the Earth's negativity to spread out into the heavens."¹

From these words—taking account of the whole context in which they were spoken—it follows that on the one hand a solar eclipse serves as a regularly recurring “safety valve” that dilutes or diffuses evil human will impulses, by allowing them to exit from the Earth into higher realms, where the beings of the spiritual hierarchies can (hopefully) deal with them by way of absorbing and transforming them. On the other hand, there is at the time of a solar eclipse a very real danger that evil human will impulses can be received by adversarial spiritual beings, who could then make use of such impulses for negative purposes upon the Earth.

There is no doubt that the Great American Solar Eclipse was a very important event for America and, as we shall see, for the whole world. It was an event signaling the opening—for those who are spiritually awakening—to a higher octave of spiritual evolution. In other words, since the August 21 solar eclipse, new cosmic energy is streaming in, which we can learn to connect with, and which can have an accelerating influence upon our spiritual development together with Mother Earth. Simultaneously, not only are the heavenly forces streaming in more abundantly than ever, but also negative forces from the underworld are arising and redoubling their onslaught upon humanity and the Earth, knowing that “their time is short” (Revelation 12:12). In other words, the opening was simultaneously toward heaven and toward the underworld; it was an opening to the Kingdom of the Good, and at the same time to the realms of evil.

That something major has opened up is evident in the “wars and rumors of wars”² as well in terms of the occurrence of dramatic catastrophes. Looking objectively at what has taken place since the solar eclipse of August 21, evidently a time of tribulation is upon us. Thus, Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the East Coast just four days after the eclipse, causing catastrophic flooding in Houston and other towns in eastern Texas, with more than 80 deaths resulting, some 30,000 people displaced from their homes at the height of the flooding, and property damage estimated to be as much as \$180 billion. Harvey was followed some two weeks later by another extremely powerful hurricane—Irma—that inflicted devastating damage upon several Caribbean islands before making landfall in the Florida Keys on September 10. Irma's passage across Florida left an estimated 2.6 million people without power by early evening that day. After passing across Florida, the hurricane went on to impact Georgia and South Carolina, and is said to have been responsible, altogether, for at least 69 deaths. Just two days earlier, and around 48 hours after the full moon on the night September 5/6, an 8.1 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of southern Mexico around midnight September 7/8, leaving some 100 people dead. (This full moon preceding the massive earthquake in Mexico was the first full moon since the August 21 solar eclipse.) And

¹ Rudolf Steiner, *Human Questions and Cosmic Answers* (Complete Works, vol. 213), lecture of June 25, 1922 (transl. from the German by RP).

² Above all, at present (September 2017) there is widespread concern about the atomic tests conducted by North Korea. Then there are the wars or warlike situations in many countries to consider, including, for example, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Venezuela, and the Ukraine, where the expression from the gospel “wars and rumors of wars” certainly holds. In this article, however, the focus will not be on “wars and rumors of wars” but on the numerous disasters around the world recently occasioned by devastating natural catastrophes.

then, on September 19, Mexico was struck again by an earthquake—this time by a 7.1 magnitude earthquake with its epicenter some 75 miles southeast of Mexico City, causing much damage to property and with a death toll of at least 250. California, especially in the Los Angeles area, but also elsewhere in the state, had a spell of sweltering weather with temperatures in the triple digits, and consequently had to contend with a number of raging wildfires. As well as California, Oregon and Montana and Idaho have also had to deal with major wildfires. Moreover, in the vicinity of Yellowstone volcano, many earthquakes were registered, including a 3.3 earthquake on the day of the solar eclipse, August 21. And on September 2, multiple earthquakes—one measuring 5.3—rumbled through Idaho. Subsequently, on September 20, 21 and 22, Puerto Rico was devastated with damages and deaths caused by Hurricane Maria, leaving the island without power. Hurricane Maria also hit the Dominican Republic and the Turks and Caicos Islands as the storm hurtled across the Caribbean.

Not only in the USA, the Caribbean, and Mexico, but also at many locations around the world, devastating catastrophes have been reported. India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have experienced record monsoons, displacing millions of people from their homes and resulting in a high death toll. Sierra Leone and Niger have experienced massive floods and mudslides, responsible for thousands of deaths. And Sudan has experienced heavy rain and flash floods. There has also been major flooding in Argentina and severe drought in Mongolia. And to add to this apocalyptic scenario, wildfires have been reported raging in such diverse countries as Nova Scotia, Greece, Portugal, Algeria, Tunisia, Brazil, and even Siberia. This list is far from complete.³ In relation to the tribulation of humanity and the Earth occasioned by this widespread devastation, the question arises: What can we do?

It would be too much here to go more deeply into the background of these devastating catastrophes taking place worldwide since the Great American Solar Eclipse. It suffices to say that evidently tribulation is here, as prophesied by Jesus in the gospel passage quoted at the start of this article.⁴ It can also be affirmed that our only way through that which is afflicting much of the world at this time is with the help of Christ (Divine Love), Sophia (Divine Wisdom), and the Archangel Michael (the Guardian of Divine Truth and Justice), the three great guiding spirits of our time.

³ See a summary of major disasters around the world in the three weeks since the solar eclipse of August 21, 2017: <http://www.stillnessinthestorm.com/2017/09/apocalyptic-september-here-is-a-list-of-27-major-disasters-that-have-already-happened-so-far-this-month.html>.

⁴ It is most interesting to consider that the Kogi Indians, who live in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountains of Columbia, have recently issued a call to humanity to help the Earth Mother at this time, published in English translation and titled “The Mother Calls to Her Daughters” — http://www.themotherearthrestorationtrust.world/the_mother_calls_to_her_daughters. The Kogi base their lifestyles on their belief in *Aluna* (“The Great Mother”), their creator figure, who they believe is the force behind Nature. The Kogi understand the Earth to be a living being, and see humanity as Her children. They say that our actions of exploitation, devastation, and plundering for resources is weakening the Mother, *Aluna*, and is leading to our destruction. In the article “The Mother Calls to Her Daughters,” they emphasize that we are witnessing Nature catastrophes of a kind never before experienced by recent generations of humanity.

Since completing my four-year eurythmy training at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland in 1982, and finishing my two-year therapeutic eurythmy training in England in 1984,⁵ my life has been dedicated, at least to a certain extent, to the development, with the help of eurythmy, of an *arsenal of sacred magic*—eurythmy being a new spiritual language of gesture brought into the world from 1912 onward by Rudolf Steiner:

This *arsenal* is composed of formulae, gestures, and figures reproduced by the gestures. But one must not choose them arbitrarily. The choice must be reserved either according to profound knowledge confirmed by revelation or otherwise to direct revelation confirmed subsequently by the knowledge of experience.⁶

The eurythmy gestures used in connection with the words of Christ are very potent, as all who have worked seriously for a period of time with the exercises described in *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality*⁷ can attest through “the knowledge of experience.” And here is an inspiring quote for those readers unfamiliar with the practice of sacred magic:

The Tree of Life is the source of miracles of generation, transformation, rejuvenation, healing and liberation. Conscious participation with it...is the *great work* of sacred magic.... The *great work*, as an ideal, is the state of the human being who is in peace, alliance, harmony and collaboration with *life*. This is the *fruit* of the Tree of Life.⁸

These words bring to expression in a most beautiful way the development of eurythmy as a spiritual path and the application thereof as sacred magic—the whole founded upon the Tree of Life, which is now the central focus of my further work of the development of eurythmy as a spiritual path⁹ since the publication of *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality* in the year 2012.

The arsenal of sacred magic referred to here has been spiritually inspired—in some instances directly inspired by Christ or Sophia or Michael. It is a great source of spiritual help and comfort

⁵ There exists an extensive literature about the new art of movement known as eurythmy (Greek, meaning “beautiful/harmonious movement”). Eurythmy came into the world as a new performing art—*artistic eurythmy*—a dance form bringing the laws of the etheric realm to expression through gesture and choreography, moving to poetry, prose, or music. Through Rudolf Steiner there also developed *pedagogical eurythmy*, taught at schools for children and young people, and *therapeutic eurythmy* for healing illness. After completing six years of eurythmy training, four years of artistic eurythmy and two years of therapeutic eurythmy, I was guided to take up the development of *eurythmy as a spiritual path*. Thus *choreocosmos* (*cosmic and sacred dance*) came into being as a development from eurythmy. Regarding *sacred dance*: see, for example, *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2012) published in honor of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of eurythmy through Rudolf Steiner in the year 1912. Regarding *cosmic dance*: see the four-CD set *Harmonies of the Starry Spheres: Music for the Seven Planets in the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac* recorded by pianist and composer Marcia Burchard, who also authored an accompanying booklet *Dances of the Starry Spheres: An Introduction to Choreocosmos*—available from <https://sophiafoundation.org/portfolio/recordings/>

⁶ Anonymous, *Meditations on the Tarot: A Journey into Christian Hermeticism* (transl. R. Powell; New York: Tarcher/Penguin, 2002), p. 64.

⁷ Robert Powell, *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2012).

⁸ Anonymous, *Meditations on the Tarot: A Journey into Christian Hermeticism* (transl. R. Powell; New York: Tarcher/Penguin, 2002), p. 68.

⁹ I am working on a new book titled *From the Foundation Stone of Love to the Tree of Life*.

now as a means of protection and spiritual support during this time of tribulation—not only protection for ourselves, but also for our loved ones and for Mother Nature and all her creatures, including humanity as a whole. It opens a path for connecting with these three great guiding spirits of evolution—Christ, Sophia, and Michael—and also is a way of linking to the spiritual hierarchies in service of the unfolding of the Good upon the Earth, in the spirit of the words “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” The foregoing statement applies on an individual level to anyone who seriously takes up the spiritual work described in *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality* and certain other works.¹⁰ On the community level, the entire work of the Sophia Foundation can be viewed in this same light. In other words, the above statement that applies on an individual level can also be understood on a community level with regard to the work of the Sophia Foundation, which is outlined in more detail below. By the same token, the community work of the Sophia Foundation serves as a powerful source of spiritual help and comfort for many people during this time of tribulation. In the following, a brief summary of spiritual work under the auspices of the Sophia Foundation is outlined. To begin, herewith a quote from *The Mystery of Sophia* by Robert Powell & Estelle Isaacson.¹¹

The work of the authors of this book—Karen Rivers, Estelle Isaacson, Robert Powell—is focused on Sophia, as is the work of many other people connected with various Sophia communities around the world. Different communities we know of that have formed in connection with this work exist in a number of places in the United States and Canada, and also in Australia and in various countries in Europe—and no doubt elsewhere as well. These communities have constellated because of a heartfelt seeking among their members to know and connect with Sophia. This work of honoring Sophia is centered upon the cognition that the human being is formed through the Divine Wisdom of Sophia, and that each human being is on a journey over a long period of time together with the Earth to grow more and more into Sophia’s wisdom. This Sophia work in our time seeks to be a vessel for the worldwide community of Sophia—known as the *Rose of the World*—which is due to arise in the future during the Age of Aquarius. The *Rose of the World* can be likened to a spiritual flower that exists on a cosmic level, where each petal is a different religion or spiritual tradition, and where the stem is the one all-pervasive divinity that nourishes all the petals—together forming a unified blossom. It is an image of the future time when the Holy Wisdom of Divine Sophia prevails and humanity knows the unique, yet unified relationship of the world religions and spiritual traditions.

To this purpose various wisdom schools offer creative study programs that are intended to help participants grow spiritually and come back into resonance with the sacred matrix of creation that is an expression of Sophia. In addition to the study programs, there is often a focus upon artistic activity with a view to activating each

¹⁰ <https://sophiafoundation.org/resources/> and <https://sophiafoundation.org/product-category/grail-guides/> and <https://sophiafoundation.org/product-category/meditational-study-material/> — these links lead to various resources offered through the Sophia Foundation for the spiritual work under consideration here.

¹¹ Robert Powell & Estelle Isaacson, *The Mystery of Sophia* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2014), pp. 153-157.

individual's creativity, while simultaneously cultivating community with one another. Work in community with such activities as sacred drama, choral singing, and choreocosmos—cosmic and sacred dance (eurythmy)—are central to the Sophia activities of the authors of *The Mystery of Sophia*, who are dedicated to serving Sophia and the arising of the future Sophia culture, the *Rose of the World*. Through choreocosmos, for example, not only do we have a communal form of dance, but also we are connecting with the cosmos through our activity. The teachings arising through this activity—inspired by Sophia—can then go out into the greater community by way of all who receive them. At this time when there is so much negativity in the world, it is important for human beings to be able to participate in something ennobling and refining. The spiritual training thus offered through such activities deepens our understanding of the human being's relationship to the cosmos in an experiential way, and also helps to uncover the wisdom deep within each human being—a wisdom that echoes the formative patterns imprinted on creation by Sophia.

The goal is to enter into Sophia's *School of Wisdom* and to arrive at consciousness of global unity, in recognition that all humankind is one family. To reach this level of consciousness, it is important that we develop empathy with all living beings, and also that we develop the faculty of intuition. Both faculties help us to come into connection with the realm of life forces, also known as the etheric realm, where unity of consciousness is a direct experience. In turn, through the etheric realm we are able to develop a sensing and a knowing of the needs of our environment, including the needs of those human beings around us. Thus we become rightly informed and we can respond wisely and responsibly.

We are living in a time when great decisions are often made without this sense of connection to the whole. Such decisions can be cold and heartless—even dangerous. As a counterbalance to cold heartlessness, the activity of choreocosmos offers an example—from among the various Sophia activities around the world—that is most helpful here, as it is an activity which lovingly strengthens the human being's connection with the etheric realm of life forces. Through becoming conscious of this connection, we become aware of how every living creature receives unconditional love from the etheric life-body of the Earth and also Divine Love from our Sun and from all the stars in the heavens, which are continually streaming down the Divine Light pouring forth from the Ultimate Source of existence. The experience of Divine Light, Life, and Love brings gratitude and awakens magnanimity. In love and gratitude, one can reach out to the world and truly serve the needs of one's environment. By contemplating the stars, a sense of global oneness is awakened. All cultures of the Earth are blessed by the stars, by the Sun, Moon and planets, through which we are connected with Sophia's "body"—she who is "clothed with the Sun, with the Moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1).

Another example of contemporary Sophia activity is that of *Sophia Grail Circles*—communities of people who join together to form vessels to serve Divine Love and Holy Wisdom in cultivating a growing awareness of the spiritual evolution of humanity and the Earth.¹² Toward this end, participants in *Sophia Grail Circles* come together consciously and purposefully to maintain the intention and vision of Sophia's Divine Plan of creation, and as a community to connect with Divine Love and Holy Wisdom through sacred celebrations. *Sophia Grail Circles* are endeavors to focus on Divine Love and Holy Wisdom as the fountain of Life at the heart of each spiritual community. In coming together, holding this vision and intention, there arises a human weaving that serves to enable the inspiration of the Holy Soul (the third person of the Sophia Trinity: Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul) to work into the hearts of each and every person in the circle and into the heart of the community.

Connected with and arising from the *Sophia Grail Circles* are the *Sophia Grail Circle Facilitators Training* and the associated *Grail Knights Training*.¹³ Also, there are the Sophia Foundation pilgrimages to sacred sites—in 2018 to the island of Bali, the location of the Earth's Venus chakra. Beginning in the year 2012 with the Mount Shasta retreat—Mount Shasta, California, being the Earth's Saturn chakra—the Sophia Foundation has organized pilgrimages every second year to one of the Earth's planetary chakras: in 2014 to Lake Titicaca in Peru (the Earth's Mercury chakra) and in 2016 to the Holy Land, in particular to Jerusalem as the Earth's heart chakra.¹⁴

Lastly, the arising of *Rosamira Circles*—*Rosa Mira* being the Russian expression for the *Rose of the World*—should be mentioned. The *Rosamira Circles* are communities of friends who, when possible, come together monthly to celebrate the cycle of the year in its spiritual depth—devoted to the spiritual unity of humankind, drawing upon spiritual teachings from the great religions and spiritual traditions of the world, and honoring the over-arching guidance of Divine Love and Holy Wisdom for humanity and the whole Earth. The four cornerstones of the solar year (the summer and winter solstices, and the vernal and autumnal equinoxes) are generally celebrated at the festivals of Advent/Christmas, Easter, Pentecost/St. John's Tide, and Michaelmas, the latter being celebrated shortly after the autumnal equinox—the traditional date of the Michaelmas festival (September 29th), honoring the Archangel Michael as the Guardian of Truth and Justice. The celebration of these festivals offers a community-based path that unfolds through the cycle of the year. Additional gatherings generally take place in between these four major festival celebrations, whereby an overall monthly rhythm of gatherings to celebrate the spiritual unity of humanity throughout the entire year offers a powerful support for the community. With song, dance, and story—also readings, prayer, and liturgy—spiritual community is formed with the

¹² www.sophiafoundation.org > Activities

¹³ <https://sophiafoundation.org/portfolio/>

¹⁴ Robert Powell & David Bowden, *Astrogeographia: Correspondences between the Stars and Earthly Locations* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2012), chapter 10—“Earth Chakras.”

goal of seeking to deepen the conscious unfolding of the human soul and spirit. The *Rosamira Circles* are open to all children, youth, and adults, who seek to join together in service of Divine Love and Holy Wisdom, and to walk in spiritual consciousness with open hearts toward the future.

Following on from the above summary, there are some other important points elucidated in *The Mystery of Sophia*, which are relevant to our considerations in this article. The door to the Aquarian Age will open in the year 2375. As this date, relatively speaking, is not so far in the future, we can imagine it now acting as a portal, calling groups and individuals in a preparatory way toward the lofty aims of the dawning Aquarian Age during which the culture of Sophia will blossom and flourish around the world. This approaching Sophia culture is known as the *Rose of the World*. Thus the birth of the Aquarian Age—in the not-too-distant future—signifies the advent of the world Sophia culture, the *Rose of the World*, during which brotherly and sisterly love will flourish in all hearts aligned with Sophia's loving and unifying mission. The flag-bearers of this future culture are already forming and creating communities around the world in order to sow the seeds for what will then blossom.

The new paths that are unfolding can be recognized by their moral integrity, their inherent cultivation of an attitude of loving kindness, their resolute quest for truth and wisdom, and their cultural artistry, for these are all signatures of Sophia's work in the world. In addition to the new cosmic and sacred dance forms of choreocosmos and the devotional work of Sophia-oriented prayer, meditation, and celebratory Grail and Rosamira Circles, we can imagine many other expressions of Divine Sophia flowing into the creative inspiration of hearts hearing Her call. All of these new paths will contribute to the development of future organs of cognition through which Sophia can be known by way of an inner experience within the chalice of one's own soul.

Returning to the question: What can we do?—it is important to hold in consciousness that the spiritual work of everyone, whether solely on an individual level or undertaken together with others in a group, is significant, especially at this time of tribulation. The main purpose of this article is to try and put things into perspective, to show that in relation to what is now taking place in the world we can have faith in the positive contribution of all the small things we do—through our prayers and spiritual practices—along the lines of what is outlined in the foregoing. However, it is important that we always hold in consciousness the potency of prayer, especially when it is from the level of the heart. Then the spiritual hierarchies are able to receive our prayers. Something is set in motion within the angelic beings of the spiritual hierarchies that enables them to act from spiritual realms into earthly situations. This is an example of sacred magic, which depends upon the “force multiplication” of higher spiritual beings for our prayers to become effective in the true sense of sacred magic. In this case, then, by way of analogy, a prayer is like an acorn that mysteriously becomes a mighty oak. And not just the act of praying, but in fact all our spiritual activity can be undertaken as a kind of prayer which can potentially set something in motion that becomes truly powerful through the “force multiplication” of beings of the spiritual hierarchies who, having taken up our prayer or spiritual activity, can lovingly amplify it, turning it into a powerful spiritual force. This knowledge can generate the faith that

our “little works” —individually or in a group—in service of the spirit can “move mountains.” In the words of Jesus:

Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you (Matthew 17:20).

Of key significance in our considerations here is that which Valentin Tomberg addresses in the preceding article when he says:

The main objective vocation of humankind lies in these two directions—to make the Earth visible to heaven on the one hand, and on the other to thoroughly imbue the Earth with morality.

For our prayers to work in this way, they have to comprise and be motivated by

selfless thoughts and feelings...directed toward the spirit. It is these that create the moral and spiritual illumination by which earthly concerns can be seen from the spiritual world.... “Ye are the light of the world” refers to the light that, issuing from the Earth, must radiate into the cosmos.

These words offer wonderful guidance with regard to the formulation of our prayers.

Kindling light that radiates into the cosmos, however, is just one side of the objective significance of the spiritual stream in humanity. The other side involves inwardly changing the Earth itself.... Without “I” consciousness, nature cannot gain the ability to distinguish between good and evil, and thus cannot be healed of its disease. Human beings, however, can give nature something that, in effect, approximates “I” consciousness, just as salt within the human organism effectively approximates blood. This substance is etheric life forces imbued spiritually with morality from the human “I.” In fact, it is no longer life ether in the sense of natural activity, but the beginning in human beings, through the transformation of the ether forces, of a new, fifth type of ether. This new type of ether that begins in humankind was called *moral ether* by Rudolf Steiner, which expresses its nature most accurately. This moral ether, which comes into being when the Christ impulse permeates human volition and activities, is the “salt of the Earth,” allowing the moral element to access nature in a way that has value for nature. The purpose of moral ether is to become an organ for the constructive influence of goodness in nature, just as salt may serve in the human organism as an organ of constructive “I” activity, which normally functions through the blood. By means of actions that express a morally awakened will and with flashes of moral ether, human beings will penetrate natural events. And the beings of nature will direct their way in harmony with those currents of moral ether, which will represent nature’s conscience.

The foregoing passage quoted from Valentin Tomberg’s article presents the seed impulse of the development through human beings, working together with Christ, of *moral ether*. It is especially this seed impulse toward the development of moral ether that is of key significance in

relation to the devastating catastrophes now taking place around the world. It is this contribution from human beings that Mother Nature and all her creatures are waiting for—this being an important aspect of sacred magic. We see a striking example of this aspect at work in Christ's stilling of the storm.

Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matthew 8:23-27).



Jesus Stilling the Tempest
James Tissot

This passage reveals the power of the moral ether streaming out through the Christ-permeated word and how the nature beings, the so-called elemental beings, respond to this moral power. It is the manifestation of the moral ether through human beings—in thought, word, and gesture—that the elemental beings and the whole of Nature are awaiting. Then the devastating catastrophes will start to be tamed, and a new era of peace between humanity and Nature will begin to unfold.

We do not know how long this period of tribulation will last.¹⁵ What is important, though, is to hold the *Rose of the World* in consciousness as *the light at the end of the tunnel*. On the scales of world evolution, the coming Sophia culture of the *Rose of the World* will be a time of healing and restoration of humanity from its current descent into total barbarism—a historically unprecedented descent—with western humankind leading the way; and the era of the *Rose of the World* will also be a time of restoration of Planet Earth, healing and redeeming Mother Earth from the devastating ravaging of our beautiful planet that is now taking place. The development of moral ether and the manifestation thereof in human beings through thought, word, and deed will play an important part in this work of healing and redeeming the Earth. And we can commence now in committing ourselves, through our prayers and spiritual practices, to do something to help give birth to this future Sophia culture that is beginning to shine in as a tangible reality for awakening human beings upon the Earth. In other words, all our activity directed toward Christ and Sophia is important—both individually and in groups. Herewith some further indications:

¹⁵ There is an indication of it lasting for seven years: <http://cosmicconvergence.org/?p=22198>

This would be approximately the time interval between the Great American Solar Eclipse of August 21, 2017, and the next solar eclipse whose path of totality will be visible across part of the United States, which will be on April 9, 2024—the path of which will extend up from southern Texas across the United States to subsequently pass through northern New England.

(a) In relation to the current assault upon Mother Earth and her creatures through weather manipulation,¹⁶ weapons of destruction,¹⁷ the genetic manipulation of plants,¹⁸ and other diabolical means,¹⁹ it is helpful to deepen into Rudolf Steiner's lecture *The Etherization of the Blood* (October 1, 1911), including the question and answer session at the end of this lecture. During this lecture he speaks of a future time *when the Earth will be bathed in a moral-ether atmosphere*. In relation to the current assault on Mother Earth, this future for the Earth is what we have to hold in consciousness; and this is precisely in alignment with the foregoing content of this article. It is important to note that immediately after these words "*the Earth will be bathed in a moral-ether atmosphere*," Rudolf Steiner refers to the Maitreya Buddha who will speak words imbued with moral power—and this will be transmitted to his disciples. And immediately before this quote, he refers to the etherization of the blood as a stream flowing up from the heart to the head. One can add: it is through the etherization of the blood that the moral ether arises and human beings will then learn how to stream out the moral ether for the benefit of Nature.

The development of moral ether is also a primary goal with all our choreocosmos activity, as well as with the sacramental activity of the Sophia Grail Circle and with the Grail Knights' practices referred to earlier. To this end, with the choreocosmos-eurythmy it is important that our gestures are formed lovingly from the heart, so that they can begin to stream out through our arms and hands—and also through our legs and feet—something of the moral ether for Nature, to help in the attainment of the Earth becoming bathed in a moral-ether atmosphere. In the words of Valentin Tomberg quoted above:

[This is] the beginning in human beings, through the transformation of the ether forces, of a new, fifth type of ether. This new type of ether that begins in humankind was called *moral ether* by Rudolf Steiner, which expresses its nature most accurately. This moral ether, which comes into being when the Christ impulse permeates human volition and activities, is the "salt of the Earth," allowing the moral element to access nature in a way that has value for nature. The purpose of moral ether is to become an organ for the constructive influence of goodness in nature.

¹⁶ GeoEngineeringWatch.org is an important source for keeping track of developments with regard to the ongoing weather manipulation that we are now experiencing. See, for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFISCPRRYE>.

¹⁷ As long as there are human beings continuing to serve a military-industrial complex by developing weapons of war through applied science and technology, the Earth and all beings—including humanity—connected with this planet will suffer. It is time for a worldwide peace movement to arise, to demand the ending of the insanity of war, to insist upon discontinuing the use of the terribly destructive weapons of modern technology, so that humanity can commit to a new era of peace on Earth. All who are dedicated to the coming into being of the future Sophia culture of the *Rose of the World* are committed to peace. For this future culture is called *Philadelphia* in the Apocalypse of John, which means brotherly and sisterly love between human beings—a love born out of the recognition that humanity is one great family.

¹⁸ See, for example, William F. Engdahl, *Seeds of Destruction: The Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation* (Toronto, Canada: Global Research, 2007) and Jeffrey M. Smith, *Seeds of Deception: Exposing Industry and Government Lies about the Safety of the Genetically Engineered Foods You are Eating* (Portland, ME: Yes Books, 2003).

¹⁹ Many diabolical means could be mentioned here. One of the most striking is Transhumanism—see, for example: Thomas Horn & Nita Horn, *Forbidden Gates—How Genetics, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Synthetic Biology, Nanotechnology, and Human Enhancement Herald The Dawn of Techno-Dimensional Spiritual Warfare* (Crane, MO: Defender Publishing, 2011).

This, on a spiritual level, is an answer to the weaponization of Mother Earth that is now underway under Ahriman's direction.²⁰ As Rudolf Steiner indicates in this lecture, it is through the etherization of the blood that the human being's blood can unite with Christ's blood. One could add that it is in this way that Christ's "I" —borne by his blood—is born in the human "I" in the sense of St. Paul's words "Not I, but Christ in me." We can then begin to participate with Christ in the activity of streaming out the moral ether, leading toward the Earth becoming bathed in a moral-ether atmosphere.

(b) It may seem as though the author of this article is promoting the work of the Sophia Foundation as THE way for our time. In order to counterbalance this impression, I wish to make it clear that I see many others who are working in similar ways to how we are working in the Sophia Foundation. For example, the *Global Coherence Initiative* is heart-centered and caring for Mother Earth. This initiative, originating from the Heart-Math work,²¹ seems to be completely independent of the tradition to which the Sophia Foundation belongs, and also it appears to be—at least, to some extent—aligned with that which is indicated above in this article. The *Global Coherence Initiative* outline is quite a lengthy article.²² However, one can gain a fairly good idea about it by reading the first three or four pages and the Conclusions. The *Global Coherence Initiative* is given here simply as an example, as there are many other initiatives, impulses, and spiritual movements in the world at the present time that are dedicated to similar ideals such as those of the Sophia Foundation in working toward the future Sophia culture of the *Rose of the World*. Herewith some feedback from the teacher of a Sophia Foundation choreocosmos group, after she communicated ideas from the *Global Coherence Initiative* article:

The students were particularly inspired about the research, reported from the *Global Coherence Initiative* article, on the effects of meditation on lowering violence and death toll in different areas. The students wish to go forward, with conscious planning and intention, in this manner, for each choreocosmos gathering (twice a month) plus our weekly sacred dance/prayer work, as deed, offering the fruits our practice for the healing of humanity and the Earth Mother and Nature. This is a new and wonderful shift toward spiritual activism for our group...

(c) Returning now to the task of the Maitreya Buddha—that of developing the moral power of the word, and therewith bringing the moral ether to manifestation, as referred to above—let us consider the following regarding the moral power of the word. Herewith some relevant quotes from *Gautama Buddha's Successor: A Force for Good in the World* by Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson.²³

²⁰ Professor Michel Chossudovsky has written about the great dangers for humanity and the Earth associated with the weaponization of the Earth. See, for example, his 2007 article: "Weather Warfare: Beware the US Military's Experiments with Climatic Warfare" — <https://www.globalresearch.ca/weather-warfare-beware-the-us-military-s-experiments-with-climatic-warfare/7561>

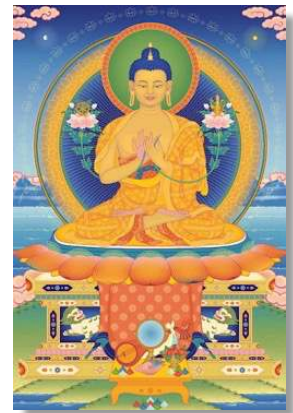
²¹ <https://www.heartmath.org/>

²² See <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3833489/> for an excellent article—published on March 1, 2012, and titled *The Global Coherence Initiative: Creating a Coherent Planetary Standing Wave*.

²³ Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson, *Gautama Buddha's Successor: A Force for Good in the World* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2013).

[p. 104—a quote from Valentin Tomberg] The faculty of the word and that of moral logic (keeping the word and not denying the name) will be most highly developed at the beginning of the sixth epoch, that of Philadelphia [Rev. 3:7], when the Maitreya Buddha, the “Bringer of Goodness,” will appear. The special task of the Maitreya is to develop what has “little strength”—the word and the thought—into a power that will regain a position in the world that allows a cultural community to evolve. The moral force of the word will live and work so powerfully in the Maitreya that human beings will be stopped and will experience a spiritual conversion.... through the magical, moral influence of the word. Thoughts will no longer merely explain the nature of goodness, but actually transmit it. The Maitreya Buddha will not merely show goodness; he will awaken it in the soul.

[p. 72—a quote from Estelle Isaacson] The Maitreya Buddha will have the ability to call upon the powers of the elements, elemental powers. But because of great purity and wisdom he will use those powers only in the most noble and benevolent ways. The individuality of the Maitreya will have had access to those powers in prior lifetimes and will have learned the true way—the noble and moral way of working with the elements. He will lift the elements to a higher level through his work. The Maitreya will be able to create through the power of the Word. He will speak into existence higher creation. In this way, Nature will be able to claim its redemption. His disciples shall perform this work also—the work of redeeming Nature. He will re-establish the connection between Heaven and Earth. Nature will be lifted into a higher spiritual existence. The angelic realm will be able to work more closely with Nature, much more so than it does now.



[pp. 122-123—a quote from Robert Powell] ...through living deeply and intensively with this meditation²⁴ one is able to receive the *Foundation Stone of Love* into one's heart. This meditation was given at a special moment in time in the early twentieth century, at the onset of the Second Coming of Christ. The first three verses of the Foundation Stone meditation were addressed to the human soul by Christ immediately preceding the onset of his return in a suprasensory form in the world of life forces, the ethereal realm of Mother Earth. It is in an ethereal form and as a moral force in Nature—“in the clouds,” “like lightning flashing from the east and shining in the west”—that he is manifesting himself now, since 1933, at this time of his Second Coming.²⁵ The Foundation Stone meditation is a powerful source of attunement to this new manifestation of Christ.... Now, in our time, the laying of the Foundation Stone

²⁴ Rudolf Steiner's “Foundation Stone Meditation”—see Robert Powell & Lacquanna Paul, *The Foundation Stone Meditation in the Sacred Dance of Eurythmy* — <https://sophiafoundation.org/product/the-foundation-stone-meditation-in-the-sacred-dance-of-eurythmy/>

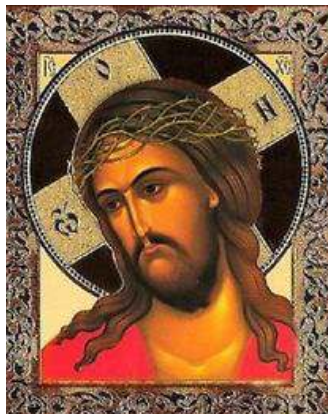
²⁵ The Second Coming of Christ—alongside devotion and dedication to Sophia, the Bride of the Lamb—the most important and significant theme of our time. “The greatest mystery of our time concerns the Second Coming of Christ”—Rudolf Steiner, *The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2003), p. 19.

of Love through Rudolf Steiner is an expression of the baptismal event of Christ's Second Coming, heralding his Presence in the ethereal realm enveloping and permeating Mother Earth. Through the Foundation Stone of Love, one is "baptized" into the Second Coming of Christ.

Lastly, regarding the moral ether, see the preceding article by Valentin Tomberg, *The Cosmic Meaning of the Beatitudes*: Christ's words "Ye are the salt of the earth" refer to the struggle against Ahriman (Satan) in the outer, objective world. Here Valentin Tomberg describes how Ahriman's main weapon in nature is "a subtle earthly electricity." What is meant here? Now, in our time, it is possible to say that this refers to *electromagnetic frequencies*. Valentin Tomberg goes on to say this:

In the conflict with Ahriman over nature, the main weapon of the beings of the spiritual world is *celestial electricity*. Flashes of *celestial lightning* often destroy and reduce to chaos the preparations of subterranean spheres that threaten nature and humanity...²⁶

There is much more that could be said about the themes discussed in this article; however, this will have to wait until another time. With this article, it is my hope that some indications regarding the question "What can we do?"—in face of the devastating catastrophes now taking place in the world—will be helpful to the reader. And, as referred to earlier in this article, our only way through that which is afflicting much of the world at this time of tribulation is with the help of Christ (Divine Love), Sophia (Divine Wisdom), and the Archangel Michael (the Guardian of Divine Truth and Justice), the three great guiding spirits of our time. Therefore I would like to close this article with the powerful and protective mantric formula communicated by Valentin Tomberg: *Michael-Sophia in nomine Christi*, which could be translated from the Latin as "Michael and Sophia in the name of Christ."²⁷



²⁶ Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006), pp. 222-227, concerning the significance of the words "Ye are the salt of the earth" in the section on *The Cosmic Meaning of the Beatitudes* reproduced as the first article in this issue of *Starlight*.

²⁷ Valentin Tomberg, *Inner Development* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1992), p. 32.

**Anne Catherine Emmerich:
Visions of Datula and Pontianus
(And a Relic of the Precious Blood and of Mary's Hair)**

James Wetmore



Most readers of the journal *Starlight* will already be familiar with the visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824), of which expanded and supplemented editions were published in 2015 and 2016 by Angelico Press.¹ These editions benefitted from the publication in 2009 of much of the content of the original 38 notebooks of Clemens Brentano, who attended Anne Catherine for extended periods over a span of six years, till just prior to her death, keeping meticulous records of her visions and their conversations during that period.

These notebooks, as first published, comprised over 8000 pages, even with much of the content related to the connected life of Christ Jesus left out. A fuller edition is now being made available. In this issue of *Starlight* we are including Anne Catherine's visions of Datula, about whom—apart from these visions—nothing is otherwise known.

~ James Wetmore

In June, 1822, the Pilgrim received from a suppressed Carmelite convent of Cologne a little package inscribed *De Cruore Jesu Christi*, which he hid, unknown to Anne Catherine, in the closet at the head of her bed. The next day she said:

I have had a very uneasy night; I was in a most singular state! I was attracted in this direction [pointing toward the closet] by a sweet feeling of hunger, a feeling of thirst, an insatiable longing! It was as if I were forced to fly thither while drawn at the same time in a contrary direction. In this excited state, I saw numerous successive scenes. I saw over there the whole of Christ's agony in the Garden of Olives. I saw him kneeling on the rock in the grotto and sweating blood. I saw the disciples sleeping near, while the sins of mankind were crushing their Lord. I saw the rock sprinkled with the drops of congealed blood, which were in time completely hidden by the overlying dust and earth. It seemed as if that covering had been removed, that I might see those drops. I seemed to see it all in the far, far past. Then I had a vision of the most blessed Virgin who, while her son agonized in the grotto, knelt on a stone in the courtyard of Mary Mark's house. She left upon it the imprint of her knees. She suffered the agony of Jesus with him; she became unconscious, and her friends

¹ Let us recall, as discussed in the Anne Catherine Emmerich volumes hitherto published by Angelico Press, that it was the extraordinary temporal detail embedded in these visions that enabled Robert Powell to determine precise dates corresponding to the day-by-day itinerary of the Ministry of Jesus. In this way, it became possible, in turn, to align events in the life of Christ Jesus with the stars and planets, and thereby establish horoscopes for those events, yielding then the basis for a new star-wisdom, astrosophy, which, further, forms the basis for Choreocosmos—Cosmic and Sacred Dance, a newly-developing aspect of the art of Eurythmy especially devoted to aligning all aspects of the human being to the inner and outer working of the spiritual reality represented by the stars.

supported her. These two scenes were presented to me at one and the same time. Then I had a vision of Mary's hair, and I saw again that it had been divided into three parts and that the apostles cut some off after her death.

Here the Pilgrim produced the little bag with the above-named relics, which Anne Catherine regarded devoutly for a few moments.² She then said:

I see it again, and that is really the blood of Christ! There are three tiny particles, and they exert an influence totally different from the bones of the saints. They attract me most wonderfully; they excite in my soul a sweet, longing desire! Other relics shine with a light which, compared to this, is as a fire compared to the splendor of the noonday sun.

At intervals, she repeated:

It is the blood of Christ! Once before I saw some that had flowed from a host. This is truly some of the blood of Christ that remained on the earth. It is not the substance of blood, but it is like it in color. I cannot explain it. I saw the angels gathering up only what flowed to the earth during the Passion and on the road to Golgotha.

And now Anne Catherine had repeated visions upon the discovery, the worship, the whole history of this relic. She related them at intervals, as follows.

I saw a devout princess in pilgrim's garb going to Jerusalem with a numerous train. She belonged to the Isle of Crete. She was not yet baptized, though she ardently sighed for that grace. I saw her first in pagan Rome in a time of peace just before a persecution; for the pope, who instructed her, dwelt in an old ruined edifice, and the Christians held secret assemblies here and there.

²With this relic was the following document: "I, John Verdunckh, Chamberlain and Master-of-the-Robes to His Electoral Highness Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, etc., hereby attest that his Most Serene Princess and Lady, Countess-Palatine of the Milne, Duchess of Upper and Lower Bavaria, etc., *née* Duchess of Lorraine, having died in the convent of Randshofen, bequeathed her effects to her heirs. On the occasion of their being put in possession of them, the Marechal of the Court of His Electoral Highness, Count Maximilian Kurz von Senfftenan, etc., presented some tokens of remembrance to many connected with the execution of said bequests, whereby there happily fell to me a golden *Agnus Dei* with diamond pendant, enclosing a relic of Our Dear Lady's hair. I know not whether the Countess was aware of its containing this relic, but I kept it carefully and reverently, and gave it to my daughter Anne of Jesus, Carmelite religious, on the day of her profession in the convent of Cologne. Three or four years after, my gracious master, His Electoral Highness, after the birth of his heirs by his second wife, caused the holy relics to be exposed. Among them was a large piece of the *Terra madefacta Sanguine Christi*, of which he put three particles into an *Agnus Dei*, for Madame, his Countess, and the two young princes respectively. On the paper on which it had been divided there still remained two or three particles, so small that His Highness could not pick them up. He ordered me to burn them for fear of desecration. I folded them in the fine paper, but did not burn them as ordered. I preserved them most honorably and, at the request of my dear daughter, Anne of Jesus, I gave them to her. This I attest upon my conscience and as I hope for salvation! I declare the above statement true and exact, and in proof of the same, I have marked the relics with my private seal. I have written the above, I sign it, and I affix thereunto my seal, given at Munich, the 30th day of May, AD 1643.

The Christians were tolerably secure in the holy land, though a journey to Jerusalem was attended by many dangers. The city was very much changed: hills had been leveled, valleys filled up, and streets built over the principal holy places. I think, too, that the Jews were confined to one quarter of the city, and only the ruins of the temple were to be seen. The site of the holy sepulcher was near Golgotha and still beyond the city limits, but it could not now be reached—the road leading to it had been closed, and buildings had been raised over and around it. There dwelt in caves hard by many holy personages who venerated the sacred spot and who seemed to belong to a community established by the first bishops of apostolic times. They could not visit the holy sepulcher in body, but they often did so in spirit. Few of the inhabitants seemed to trouble themselves about these Christians. They could, by using some precautions, freely visit the holy places around the country. They could also dig in search of, and collect, precious things. It was at this period that many bodies of the saints of the early ages were found and preserved.

The pilgrim princess, while praying on the Mount of Olives, saw in vision the precious blood. She pointed it out to a priest of the holy sepulcher. With five companions he went to the spot indicated, turned up the earth, and found part of the colored rock, upon which Jesus had knelt, sprinkled with blood. As they could not remove the whole stone that formed a part of the solid rock, they detached from its surface a piece as large as one's hand. Of this the princess received a part, as also some relics of the garments of Lazarus and the old Simeon, whose tomb not far from the temple lay in ruins. I think the princess is inscribed in the calendar, although she is not known among us. The piece of stone was three-cornered, with various colored veins. At first it was placed in an altar, and afterward in the foot of a monstrance.

July 8: The father of the princess was descended from the Cretan kings, but Crete was at this time in the hands of the Romans. He still had vast possessions and lived in a castle near a city in the western part of the island, Cydon, or Kanea (or something of the kind),³ where grow quantities of yellow, ribbed fruit, broad at the stem and flat at the top.⁴

Between the city and the castle was a great arch through which one could see right into the former. A long avenue led to it. The father had five sons living. The mother had died while the daughter was still young. The father had been to the holy land and Jerusalem. One of his ancestors had been an acquaintance of that Lentulus⁵ who had loved Jesus so much and who had been a friend of Peter, from whom he had learned the doctrines of Christianity. Hence it was that he was not unfavorable to the new religion. Once he was in Rome with his daughter's future husband. They conversed together of Christianity, the young man expressing his hope of one day embracing its

³ The city's name was similar to that of a city in the Holy Land (Cydon = Sidon, Cana = Cana; Cana is the former Cydon, by which Knossos is meant). CB

⁴ Doubtless she meant quinces, known as *malum Cydonium*.

⁵ An article on Lentulus will be included in an upcoming volume of new translations from Clemens Brentano's notes of Anne Catherine's visions.

teachings. It was on this occasion, I think, that they agreed upon the marriage or, at least, became acquainted. They received from a priest more detailed instructions. The affianced, a count, was in fact of Roman extraction, though born in Gaul.

The Cretan prince became more and more estranged from paganism. His daughter and other children, whom he had reared as well as he knew how, often heard him lauding Christianity. He had a right and claim over the labyrinth of Crete which, however, owing to the change in his sentiments, he resigned to his son-in-law. The labyrinth and temple were no longer used as formerly. Men were no longer brought there to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, though idolatry was still practiced. Numbers flocked to them out of curiosity, and they were the scene of many shameful observances. At a distance, the labyrinth looked like a verdant mountain.

The verdant mountain was covered with all manner of trees, walls, and idolatrous temples from which one might be lowered down, though it was possible also to ascend thereto from below. There were intricate passageways and large rooms, greater in length than breadth. One came often into round chambers illuminated with lamps. These chambers were open above, and plants and trees could sometimes be seen along their perimeters. When men approached, the wild animals crept into their lairs, only to spring forth upon them, then, from such hiding places. Lewd women were kept there also. In the middle was a great plaza upon which many idols were assembled in the form of a pyramid. There was some sort of structure built above the plaza, though it was still possible to see through to the opening and trees growing upon the distant mountainside.⁶

When the young princess was in Rome to be instructed, she may have been seventeen years old; and when in the following year she made her pilgrimage to Jerusalem, it seemed as if her father was dead and she was her own mistress. She carried the precious blood on her person in a richly embroidered girdle in which were several little pockets. All the pilgrims wore such girdles, crossed on the breast.

She returned to Crete, but it was not long before the count took her away again. They embarked in a ship for Rome, where they stayed until secretly baptized. The papal chair had long been vacant, for there had been confusion, a schism, and a secret massacre of Christians. From Rome they embarked for Gaul with a numerous retinue of soldiers, having lived about six months after their marriage, partly in Rome and partly in Crete. The count now wore the precious blood in a girdle, for the princess had given it him as a pledge of her fidelity. His castle was on an island in the Rhone about seven leagues [hours] from Avignon and Nîmes, near a little village later known as St. Gabriel's. It owed its origin to a miracle by which a man had been saved during a

⁶ It seems this arrangement was not the same as the labyrinth of old, but perhaps rather like that of which students of Apollonius of Tyana sometimes spoke, perhaps constructed in association with idolatrous temples, underground passageways and gardens, the like of which Diodor Siculus and Pliny the Elder discovered already destroyed in their own time.

storm on the lake. Tarascon and Martha's Solitude were not far off, Martha's monastery being situated on a mountain lying between the Rhone and a lake.

We find here in Brentano's notes that Anne Catherine said further, regarding the location of Martha's monastery in connection with a hand-drawn map (which unfortunately has gone missing), that

it lay among rocky mountains east of a little river, between a small lake and a larger hook-shaped lake communicating with the sea. It was here that Martha gathered together many pious women. She also traveled further north [up river?] to Avignon, where she taught, and healed a drunken youth.

On this occasion Anne Catherine quite precisely pointed out on her map the town of Marseilles [Marsilia] where, as she said, Martha [and the others] had made landfall [after their miraculous journey from the Holy Land]. She added also that there was at that time in the wilderness around Tarascon a dragon wreaking havoc among the people, which Martha slew by making the sign of the cross.⁷

There were at that period in Nîmes some Christian catechists living together secretly, and the count received from time to time the visit of a holy hermit, a priest. The precious blood was, at first, preserved in a dark, underground vault whose entrance lay through many others, in one of which were stored plants and provisions—in winter even green trees were there preserved. It was kept in a vase like a chalice on an altar that had a little tabernacle with a locked door. Before it burned a lamp. I often saw the count and his lady praying before this tabernacle.

I saw that, at a later period, they lived apart like hermits and at a distance from their castle. They went to it only to make their devotions before the precious blood. Once they heard a voice enjoining them to place the relic in a chapel, whereupon they prepared a suitable place for it near the dining hall. Their devotion toward it ever increased, though they continued to venerate it only in secret. The relic was afterward transmitted to their heirs with numerous precautions and duplicate documents.

I saw at this time something connected with Trophimus of Arles: but I can now recall only the names. Before the count's marriage, some Christians had immigrated to that country from Palestine; they were supported by him and they lived there in little communities.

The countess's father had concealed his sentiments from his eldest sons, whose ideas differed from his; but the younger ones held the same faith as their sister, and I think there were martyrs among them.

⁷ Anne Catherine added, "Magdalene also slew at her hermitage a dragon obstructing the entrance to her cave. She took hold of it and cast it down. It must surely have been a spectral dragon."

July 11: While thinking of the precious blood I had a glimpse of the altar in the count's castle, and then I saw the countess herself, first as a maiden with her father on the Isle of Crete, then with her husband in Rome. At the same time, I saw the holy monk Moses in Rome. I saw him as a boy eight or ten years old, giving all kinds of nourishment to the Christians, sick and in prison. I saw the count and countess with other Christians in a subterranean vault, lit by lamps, where priests seemed to be instructing them from rolls of writings. There were at that period many distinguished personages secretly baptized in Rome; there was indeed no open persecution, but from time to time one or another of the Christians was seized.

I have said the Christians from Palestine had already settled near the count's domains, and that with them he kept up secret communications. They did not have holy mass at first, only prayer and reading; but later on, a hermit came about every six weeks, and afterward a priest from Nîmes to offer the holy sacrifice. The faithful at that time were still allowed to carry the blessed eucharist to their homes.

When the count and countess separated to live in solitude, they had grown children, two sons and a daughter. Their caves or hermitages were about half a league from each other and the same distance from the castle. They were however on its lands. To reach them, one had to cross a bridge over a small stream. Other Christians throughout the country lived in the same way, mutually assisting one another. At one time it was like a monastery. They did not end their days there, however, nor were they martyred; but when danger threatened, they fled.

On July 13 Anne Catherine designated a relic as belonging to Pope Anacletus, saying that he had been the fifth pope, had succeeded Clement, and had been martyred. At the same time she remarked, in allusion to the relic of the precious blood:

The priest who searched for the precious blood was the saintly Bishop Narcissus, of the race of the three holy kings, with whom his ancestors had journeyed to the holy land. It was perfectly light when he dug that night upon the Mount of Olives, and the young princess was present. Narcissus was dressed like the apostles.

Jerusalem was then scarcely recognizable, for when it was destroyed, valleys had been filled up and hills leveled. The Christians still had a church at the Pool of Bethesda between Sion and the Temple. They had had one there even in the apostles' time, but it was not now in existence. They dwelt around it in huts, and although perfectly isolated from the other inhabitants, they were obliged to pay a tax for the privilege of entering their own church. A man and a woman sat at the gate to receive from the faithful five small pieces of money as toll. This regulation lasted some time.

The Pool of Bethesda with its porches was no more, all was closed up; but there was a covered well whose waters were regarded as sacred and used by the people in time of sickness, just as we use holy water.

The count's name was the same as that of one of Augustine's friends, Pontianus; that of the countess was Tatula, or Datula—I cannot give it correctly. There is such a saint toward the close of May, or the beginning of June.

On the afternoon of July 18th, Anne Catherine suddenly exclaimed:

There was a man here just now, a cardinal, the confessor of a holy queen named Isabella. He was a very able director of souls. He told me that I must accuse myself of the good I neglect to do, and do penance for the sins of others. He showed me Datula, who possessed the relic of the precious blood. For its sake she had abandoned all her wealth and retired with her husband to grieve over their sins. The cardinal was called Ximenes, a name I never heard before. He is not canonized.

One day, having seen several things in Martha's life, Anne Catherine pointed out more precisely the abode of Pontianus and Datula.

The island with the castle lay at the mouth of the eastern branch of the Rhone, and was about half a league in circumference. Pontianus had soldiers under him; his castle looked like a strong fortress. Seven leagues further up river lay the city of Arles, and at about eight leagues distance was Martha's monastery, in a rocky, mountainous district.⁸

On July 24 Anne Catherine had a vision, occasioned by what, or referring to what, she did not know. She recounted it with all the simplicity and astonishment of a peasant girl beholding the march of a grand procession. She constantly interrupted her recital to give expression to her admiration at the magnificence, order, and propriety displayed in every part of it.

Crete is a long, narrow island, with numerous indentations, the center traversed by a mountain ridge. The castle of Datula's father was a very handsome, spacious building, apparently terraced out of a marble rock. On the different terraces were colonnades and porticoes, on top of which were gardens. After embracing Christianity, Datula's father had built these porticoes and hanging gardens as a screen to cut off his home altogether from the abominable, idolatrous temple and its labyrinths. He was a very skillful man; he could do almost anything; and he constantly superintended the architects and workmen himself. He was bald and stooped in the shoulders, but still very active and most benevolent. He owned other large properties on the island, and he also exercised some kind of authority. The wall mentioned above was built in terraces that were full of well-kept plants. They opened into rooms and passages.

⁸ Anne Catherine notes also that in Martha's time the region was much wilder than at the time of Pontianus: "It was mostly forest, with here and there a fortified castle, or fortress. In those days there were also more islands at the mouth of the region than later on." She recalled also a bridge built over the river, on which trees grew. There is reference in the notes to a map, which however has not been discovered.

Today is the anniversary of the day on which Pontianus led his bride Datula from her brothers' castle, the father being then no more. All night I saw the grand feast—so distinctly that I still have the servants and children under my eyes. Two of Datula's brothers lived in the castle with their respective families. There were many children, boys and girls, and crowds of domestics; for every child had, besides its tutors, several attendants, both male and female, each with a special duty. All the relatives of the family, with their children and servants, were then at the castle for the marriage. The road for half a league was adorned with triumphal arches and seats erected on either side, artfully twined with flowers and ornamented with statues and rich hangings. Here sat the young musicians. At the gate of the castle was a raised throne for the bride and her attendants.

Pontianus had arrived at a neighboring port the day before with a numerous retinue of ladies, soldiers, servants, and presents. He repaired to another castle at no great distance and there marshalled his procession. The joy of the bride's domestics and slaves was most touching. They had always been most lovingly treated and rewarded, and now they were all delight. They were stationed in order on the road, the highest grades nearest the castle, the children with their attendants on raised seats.

Pontianus appeared in sight with a grand cortège. Before and around him marched his soldiers, while servants in rich dresses lead asses and little nimble horses laden with baskets of clothing and pastry. Pontianus himself rode in an elegant large carriage, like a great canopied throne. It was surrounded by lighted torches set in stands transparent as glass, the canopy surmounted by a flambeau. The whole carriage was covered with gold and ivory, adorned with rich hangings, and drawn by an elephant. In Pontianus's suite was a long train of ladies.

All moved so orderly, so joyously, through the lovely country with its charming walks of golden fruits, beautiful flowers, and happy people—it was a real jubilee, but without any disorderly shouting. When the procession reached the first row of servants, clothing and flat cakes—some of the latter stuck full of little sprigs—were distributed to everyone by Pontianus's servants. And so they advanced, distributing gifts to the joyous crowd. When the bridegroom reached the seats of the children of the family, they stretched silken draperies with fringes and long streamers across the road before him, while the choir of children saluted him with music. Pontianus arose, presented them with gifts, and the procession moved on toward the brothers and sisters-in-law of the bride. At last it passed through an immense arched avenue of trees elegantly decorated, and across a bridge.

And now appeared between the magnificent buildings and gardens a kind of stage in tiers, covered with rich carpets and ornamented with garlands and beautiful statues transparent and glittering. I remember among others the representation of a whole chase, the eyes of the animals sparkling like fire. The procession took place in the daytime; but the throne of the bride was placed in a recess lit partly from behind, partly from the sides, by flambeaux such as surrounded the bridegroom's carriage. Around it

was raised a semicircle of little balconies whence burst forth at the instant of Pontianus's arrival a chorus of voices accompanied by flutes—it was all wondrously charming!

But loveliest of all was Datula, the bride, seated high on her throne, below her arrayed in double rows her young companions and attendants all in white with long veils, their hair braided artistically around their head and adorned with rich ornaments. Datula wore a glistening white robe, I think of silk, which fell in full, long folds, and her hair was entwined with most beautiful pearls.

I cannot say how powerfully I was touched when I beheld through her clothing the gleaming of the relic of the precious blood. It lay on her heart in its richly embroidered girdle, shedding rays of celestial glory over the magnificent scene. Her heart was perfectly absorbed in the thought of the sacred object she bore about her. She looked like a living monstrosity when her betrothed appeared before the throne, his attendants, male and female, in a semicircle around him. Upon a great silken cushion under a beautiful cover they bore presents of costly dresses, jewels, and ornaments of all kinds. The cushion was presented to the female attendants and then to Datula, who with her suite now descended from the throne. Veiling her face, she knelt humbly before Pontianus, who raised her up, lifted her veil, and led her by the hand first to the right and then to the left, the whole length of the semicircle, presenting her to his followers as their future mistress. It was a touching sight: the precious blood borne on Datula's person in the midst of these pagans! I think Pontianus knew of its presence, so respectful, so reverential was he. At last, they all entered the castle with the family.

No words can describe the order that reigned throughout the joyous multitude scattered in the chambers, the courtyards, the terraces and groves, or under tents, eating, singing, jesting. I saw no dancing.

There was a grand banquet in a spacious, circular hall into which one could see from all points. The bride sat by Pontianus at a table higher than those in use among the Jews. The men reclined on couches, the women sat cross-legged. Most wonderful-looking things were set on the table: great animals and figures with the meats in their sides, in their backs, or in baskets held in their mouth. It was droll and fantastic, and drew forth many pleasantries from the guests. The drinking vessels shone like mother-of-pearl. I gazed upon this scene all night.

But yet, I did not see any nuptial ceremony, though I saw Datula's departure with Pontianus. A great deal of baggage was sent on before to the ship, and amid tears and good wishes they proceeded in festal procession to the port. Pontianus, Datula, and several others rode in a long, narrow chariot on many wheels and built in sections. At the turns in the road, sometimes it wheeled so as to bring the occupants into a semicircle. It was drawn by little frisky horses.

I saw nothing disorderly during the whole feast, nothing even slightly improper; and although these people were not all Christians, there was nothing idolatrous about them. They seemed to be pleasing to God, as if all were inclining toward Christianity. The men were remarkably handsome, and I cannot forget those tall, beautiful, healthy-looking women and girls. Datula took some of them with her, among them her nurse, or governess, whose sentiments were very Christian. I did not see them embark.

On February 11, 1821, as Anne Catherine lay in ecstasy, the Pilgrim dropped from a prayer-book a little picture of Jesus Crucified, which fell on the coverlet of her bed. She seized it quickly, her eyes still closed, ran her fingers over it several times, and exclaimed:

It must be venerated! It is very precious! It has touched some sacred object; it shines brilliantly!

Then, laying it on her breast, she said:

It has touched Christ's robe, on the neck of which is a stain of the precious blood of which no one knows!

On April 8, 1823, she reported:


I have had to perform a wearisome task connected with relics of the earliest ages, in a country beyond the holy land where the priests do not dress exactly like Catholic priests. They wear very antique vestments, something like those I saw on Mount Sinai. It seemed to be in the country I always see next to that of the three kings. The city in which was the old book of prophecies on copper plates (Ctesiphon)⁹ lay to the left of it. Here I had much to do with the blood of Christ, and I had to discover a treasure of relics to the priests.

I saw seven old priests digging under ruined walls in an underground cave; they first propped the wall up for fear of its falling in. There they found holy relics sealed up in a great stone, seemingly of one piece but really formed of many three-cornered pieces skillfully put together. When it was opened, first appeared a thick hair-cloth under which reposed the treasure—the principal relics of the Passion and the holy family—all preserved in three-cornered vases placed side by side: sand from the foot of the cross, moistened and tinged with the blood of Jesus; and, in little phials, some of the water from his side—clear, consistent, no longer liquid; thorns from the crown; a piece of the purple mantle of derision; some scraps of the blessed Virgin's clothing; some relics of Anne, and many others. Seven priests were there at work while deacons held torches, and I think they placed the blessed sacrament above them. I had much to do there, and many poor prisoners—that is, poor souls—to deliver, in which work the precious blood helped me. I think the apostles had to say mass in that cave.

⁹ An upcoming volume of new translations from Brentano's notes of Anne Catherine's visions will include an article on the Book of Ctesiphon.

Vignettes from Datula's Journey to Jerusalem

Anne Catherine beheld Datula in Jerusalem at the time Narcissus was bishop there, and reported the following:

The men and women accompanying her were all clothed in masculine attire, though she herself was dressed as a woman. She was quite slender. She wore a long, wool-gray dress, and over a veil a small hat of this shape,  held in place by a ribbon fastened around her neck, which served also to hold it loose on her back should she care to remove it from her head. Panels of fabric hung from her arms. She looked most elegant.

At the time, Narcissus was resident at the church beside the Pool of Bethesda, which still stood, though it had undergone renovations, having been redesigned with numerous compartments, latticed enclosures, and galleries. The Pool of Bethesda was also much altered. The surrounding ambulatories had been blocked with rubble, so that there was not a trace left of the Pool. Instead, to the side stood a structure covering a great spring-cistern that held what remained of the Pool's waters. The circle of supports holding up this structure was formed both of old trees and newly-planted ones, which below were green. The roof was of thatch, the walls of wattling. The site served still as a place of baptism.

For a time, Datula lived together in this vicinity with some Christians. She undertook to visit all the holy sites. The holy sepulcher lay outside the city, buried in rubble, built over, and quite in ruins. The neighboring caves were inhabited by pious people.

The caves around Bethlehem, on the other hand, were still in relatively sound condition, and much revered by the Christians. I watched as Datula prayed upon the Mount of Olives, where she was granted a vision of the holy blood. When she told Narcissus of this vision, that very night he, together with some anchorites of the holy sepulcher, went to the place and, after breaking away a piece of the stone where Datula had prayed and received the vision, presented her with a corner thereof. I saw then that upon her return journey Datula visited the house of Mary in Ephesus, as also Mary's house in Nazareth, which was being maintained by some Christians.

Datula wore a wide-flowing dress of many folds, and over this a short, sleeveless outer garment open at the front. Such sleeves as there were—or rather, the lappets with which the arms might be wrapped—were attached to an undergarment whence they hung down from the shoulders like little mantles. Her hair was enclosed in a kind of coif covering the nape of her neck, over which was set her little hat. A veil lay around her neck, and she was girded with a wide belt of many laces [see drawing from the notebook].



Regarding Datula's Island

The island lay not far distant from Montpellier. At an earlier time it had still been connected to the mainland. A city is now built upon it, lying west of the mouth of the Rhone. Further west is the site of Datula's death, and further still a place called Agatha,² which Anne Catherine believed to be a Spanish town. Toulouse lay to the northwest, along a river.

Anne Catherine recalled much of this story with wonderful clarity, illustrating just how much she could have related had she received the necessary encouragement and gracious support, especially from her religious guides. "Datula would often don men's garb when venturing from her wilderness retreat to help others. She was a very spirited and determined woman."

The Pilgrim had read that at one time Montpellier had been called Agathopolis, and so he asked Anne Catherine whether she knew this name. She said: "Yes, in Datula's time the city near the island was called by that name, and is to be distinguished from another city further west called Agatha." She further described the island as a long, narrow ridge lying along the bank of the river (Rhone); and when the Pilgrim inquired whether the city may have been called Cette,³ she said: "Yes, it seems to me that that is the name by which it is now called. The castle where Datula died lies perhaps two hours further to the west, on an island that was inherited by her daughter." Then she again described the natural features of the region, especially its flora, with the utmost charm and precision.

When Datula was still with her father, she was so enthused by all she was told about Jesus that she would often say: "If only I were where he so often journeyed, and might accompany him, if but a little way." It was after this that she conceived such a yearning for the stone containing his blood.

Datula's Passing

On December 13, 1822, Anne Catherine beheld the day of Datula's death, and said that upon her baptism in Rome she had been given the name Mamille. Then she related what follows:

I have seen much of the life of Datula, and today beheld her passing from this world, of which I can recall some things. When she was in Jerusalem just prior to her marriage, she was seventeen years old. Narcissus, the Bishop of Jerusalem, died about two years later. Datula herself died sixty-two years thereafter, so that she was approximately eighty-one years of age upon her passing.

At the beginning, Datula led a secluded life with her husband on her island by the mouth of the Rhone, as has been told. Later she withdrew into the wilderness along with seventeen virgins, there to live together as a community of anchorites, much as Martha had done. At that time there were men also living a similar life, among them some priests who went about discretely teaching and converting. These priests would bring the sacrament to Datula's community, and say the Mass.

² This could be Agde.

³ Known now as Sète.

In this connection I saw much of Saturnin, the first bishop of Toulouse, who is often wrongly identified with the Saturnin who was a disciple of Christ and the apostles, and who came also to Toulouse as a captive, but was never bishop there.¹⁰ Much of what I beheld of this Saturnin who was to become bishop of Toulouse I can no longer recall in detail, but I can say that as a youth of about twelve years he one day left his parents and—it seems to me with the support of Datula's family—received a religious formation. At the time of his death he was active as a priest, but I can recall nothing more of this, even though he became bishop of Toulouse.¹¹

During the persecutions of the emperor Decius,¹² many Christians—men and women—were flushed out from their wilderness retreats and captured. However, Datula escaped and made her way to the home of her married daughter, a very old edifice with thick walls hard by the sea—indeed, it extended right out over the sea, so that water flowed beneath it. The region was densely forested and not far from Toulouse, where she would later die.

Many of Datula's former anchorite community were carried to Rome and martyred there, as were men from the neighboring monastic community. I recall the names of some of the martyred women: Agnes, Sybil, and Lillie (or perhaps Lillis or Lillit)—a beautiful, slender woman who had been a trusted maidservant to Datula. As for the martyred men, I recall the names Silvan, Azzo, and another that sounded something like Mammemas.

In time, Datula died a natural death while with her daughter, whose husband resided at the time further inland. During her illness, Datula wore a portion of the relic of the holy blood in a heart-shaped locket upon her breast. Just before her death she received the holy sacrament from a priest named Mamerius (or Mamertus), who was later martyred by being dragged to his death. Since Datula's end was near, this priest took into his possession her various religious objects, among them the locket of the holy blood. They were properly distributed, each trusted servant of her husband receiving some part in them. Those of Datula (or Mamille) herself later passed to a community rather like the Brothers of the Holy Cross,¹³ who venerated them.

¹⁰ In the upcoming volumes of new translations mentioned before, will be an extended article on the Saturnin who was an early disciple both of John the Baptist and Jesus, and further regarding the erroneous conflation of this Saturnin with the later bishop of Toulouse of the same name.

¹¹ Elsewhere Anne Catherine reports that at the age of twelve, the pagan youth Saturnin left his flock of sheep and came running through Datula's community, and then also to the Christian priests hidden in the region. Later he went to Paris, where he was ordained a priest. It was after Datula's death, she believed, that Saturnin went to Rome, later returning to Toulouse. He died a martyr, but not in Toulouse—although she was not entirely certain on this point.

¹² Trajan Decius (*Gaius Messius Quintus Decius Augustus*, c. 201–June, 251) was Roman Emperor from 249 to 251. Decius, who was born at Budalia, near Sirmium in Pannonia Inferior (now Martinci and Sremska Mitrovica in Serbia), was one of the first among a long succession of future Roman Emperors to originate from the Danube provinces. Ed.

¹³ Brentano places a question mark here after this expression.

That Datula had died was first remarked by the appearance in her room a great brilliance. Anne Catherine beheld how the blessed Virgin came to her and gathered in her soul.

Miracles were attributed to Datula's remains: a dead child laid upon her body was restored to life, and one possessed was healed. During her life, and especially during the time she lived withdrawn with her community of women, her good works were beyond enumerating. Truly, she is one of the dearest of all souls.

Datula died after Agatha, for she knew of the martyrdom of Agatha, whom she venerated. Anne Catherine then mentioned several other martyrs from this time, adding that the holy martyr Moses¹⁴ died somewhat later.

Some Additional Glimpses

Datula had three sons and a daughter. One son became a priest, another died in battle, and after a long military career the third was touched by a miracle and thereafter became a priest also. But I have forgotten any further details regarding this.

After Datula's death, her daughter was not permitted to sequester herself as she would have wished, but in the end she died a blessed death.

Datula's husband predeceased her. After a period during which they had each lived in seclusion in the vicinity of their castle (occasioned perhaps by a persecution), he withdrew again, and perished while in this state.

There was a most vivid memory during Datula's lifetime of the presence [in their region] at one time, among the early, secluded Christians, of Lazarus, Magdalene, and Martha. Christians would gather at Magdalene's cave, and also places where Martha had been active, to hold Mass—as also, I believe, at their graves. It is beyond credence to me that any doubt can remain that Lazarus, Magdalene, and Martha had been present there.

The earlier religious communities of Martha and Thekla were more regulated—having a specific Rule—than Datula's later community, which was more of the nature of fugitive women living a withdrawn, common life in cave and forest. Their Christly task was to take in and serve the persecuted, poor, sick, and destitute—teaching and converting also. During the time their community endured, many were converted, some of whom later journeyed to Rome, others all the way to Jerusalem.

The castle wherein Datula died lay by the sea, or perhaps surrounded by the sea. It was a thick-walled, rounded, somewhat crude structure. On its landward side were many gardens and trees—in particular chestnut trees of astonishing size surrounded by pleasure seats or bowers spanned by interlaced greenery. There were also long rows of high, straight trees like poplars, but rooted in water.

¹⁴ Possibly Moses the Black (330–405)—known also as Abba Moses the Robber, the Abyssinian, the Ethiopian and the Strong—an ascetic monk and priest in Egypt in the fourth century AD, and a notable Desert Father. Ed.

While still living, Datula was already regarded as a saint, and worked many wonders among the sick who came to her. She healed the blood-flux of a woman who asked for her help.¹⁵

While on her deathbed I heard Datula say that in a vision from God she was told to instruct her daughter to bring all the sick then with them to come and pray by her body after she had died.

Mamertus (or Mamerius), the priest who gave Datula the holy sacrament just prior to her death, came from a place quite distant. He was aged, and had survived a persecution at a time, I believe, before Datula had come to the region. He took from her breast the heart-shaped locket with the holy blood, along with other relics, when he took leave of her, setting out that evening in order to circumvent—as it seemed to me—certain dangers. Datula died that same night. At that time I saw how by her side a possessed woman was healed, and others with wounds or ruptures made well. Her body lay for a long time in the castle cellar.

Datula's story is exceptionally beautiful and touching. If only we had it in its entirety! She had been specially chosen already in her youth. I find nothing more touching than her time with Narcissus in Jerusalem, her visit to the grave of Mary in Ephesus (where she walked the Way of the Cross), the story of her meeting and travels with her husband, and especially her baptism.

At this, the Pilgrim expressed his surprise, for nothing had yet been said of Datula's baptism.

No? I thought I had related the whole story. It was very moving. Perhaps it will come to me again another time. She was baptized by a pope, who confided in her also. He prophesied that she would make a good marriage. I saw all this in great detail, as also the whole story of her life and of some of her saintly companions.

Datula's Daughter

On September 2, 1822, Anne Catherine discovered and identified among her dusty collection a relic of the nurse of Datula's daughter, who had been married at the other extremity of the same island where Datula and her daughter had lived. "This nurse had wed a trusted servant of Datula's husband Pontianus, who had accompanied her upon her journey to Jerusalem. This servant had three brothers, all of them pagan, who lived also on the island. One of these brothers occupied an important position and lived in a building that stood opposite the castle of Pontianus. The nurse's husband died, leaving her with a young son, who became heir of his childless uncle.

The uncle despised his sister-in-law [the former nurse of Datula's daughter], and under a pretext abducted the boy, telling his mother that he had gone missing.¹⁶

Ever after, the mother harbored a secret hatred for and fear of this man, who then,

¹⁵ Brentano adds: "Perhaps by means of the relic of the holy blood that she carried with her?"

¹⁶ Anne Catherine was not entirely certain on this point.

pretending to want to effect a reconciliation, invited her to a meal where he clandestinely served her own murdered son as a prepared dish. After consuming some of this dish, she became unusually affected and inward, reconciled with her brother-in-law, and admitted that she had secretly entertained the thought that he may have murdered her son—and so she asked his forgiveness. The villain was so shaken by this experience that he afterward converted.

Anne Catherine related this story with many such details, some seemingly tangled in some confusion. She said that both were later martyred, and mentioned Rome in this connection.

Next day, having to deal with the usual distractions and challenges of her health and household without adequate support, Anne Catherine returned to the same story, giving the name Blonda (or Blanca) as the name of the nurse, Seneca as the name of Datula's daughter, Thystus as the name of the murderous brother-in-law, and Aceo as the name of her deceased husband and father of her child. She added that Datula's daughter's name was pagan, and she had seen it in writing. She was of the opinion that a feast day must have been established for Blonda (or Blanca), adding that that very night she had seen a cloistered nun from whose mouth a glow emanated whenever she took the blessed sacrament.

The Pilgrim then diligently researched the matter of a Blonda or Blanca, and discovered what is described below:

In Roetz's *Sakramentalischem Jahrbuch*, Volume II (Cologne, 1751), page 192, we read that the son of a woman named Blonda was murdered, and his heart given her by the murderer to eat—and that she was so affected by this that love was awoken in her for the murderer, and also an intense desire to receive the sacrament and to become a nun in the Servite Order. In the introduction to this account, however, we are told further that this story is very similar to that of the Second Tragedy of the pagan playwright Seneca, which centers upon the pagan Atreo and his brother Thyesten.

Here we find Aceo in Atreo, Thystus in Thyesten, Seneca (spelled in the same way), and Blonda (not Blanca). It should also be noted that the very day of the vision, September 2, is the Feast Day of Blonda the Servite.

The Pilgrim related this very striking discovery to Anne Catherine's father confessor with the request that he ask Anne Catherine to try to call to mind again, with utmost attention, the whole story of the nurse of Datula's daughter. The good man promised to do so, but in the end forgot, as so often he did.

And so the Pilgrim took it upon himself to tell Anne Catherine what he had discovered, and thereafter asked her to please take the relic again and see if she could unravel the story further. Anne Catherine then told him, quite unaffectedly, that she had seen the story of Blonda that same day on account of its similarity to that of the nurse of Datula's daughter—adding that nine years previously she had come upon the story [of Blonda] in a religious book, and it was perhaps owing to this that the names she gave had come into her head.

And so, day after day, she promised to search for the bone fragment [the relic that had occasioned the initial vision] and see if she could sort out how the names had been interchanged. But she neglected to do so, in the end forgetting her promise. The Pilgrim must have asked twenty or more times, but she kept putting it off, saying she knew the matter well enough and felt certain she must have already related it several times.

Finally, after the Pilgrim had asked yet again, Anne Catherine located the relic later that afternoon and gave a summary account of the story given above, but with some additional details—among others, that the brother-in-law had said: “I will have it so that the God-Eaters (a derogatory pagan term for the taking of the holy sacrament) really do, for once, eat their own child.” She indicated also that it might have been that more children were dealt with in this way. He was said to have been brought later to Rome as a criminal, was converted, and confessed his conversion when he was brought before the court.

Anne Catherine said that the nurse, along with many others, was martyred in Gaul, after which their bodies were carried to Rome and along with many others there interred in beautiful caskets in a vault. She maintained that she knew quite well the names of those interred there, but had difficulty distinguishing them from others, and that it was for this reason that, when trying to sort it all out, she sometimes confused the names and thereby gave a wrong one.

The Foundation Stone Meditation as the Being of Isis/Sophia: Some Results from Working with the Foundation Stone Meditation

Bill Trusiewicz

Rudolf Steiner and the sculptor Edith Marion worked together to create a 9.5 meter (approx. 31 ft.) tall wooden sculpture of Christ positioned between Lucifer and Ahriman, which is known as *The Representative of Humanity*. It is an intriguing, monumental, world-historic sculpture that stands in the building called the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, at the hub of the Anthroposophical Society, and has been the object of no little astonishment, contemplation and study since its completion¹ in 1922. To add to the intrigue created by this work of art, Rudolf Steiner said that a spiritual being could be perceived “behind” the sculptural group; he said that with spiritual vision one could see the being Isis/Sophia there. In this paper I will put forth the idea that behind the Foundation Stone Meditation, “sculpted” in words by Rudolf Steiner, also stands the being of Isis/Sophia.

Taken on the surface, this is perhaps not such a surprising idea since The Foundation Stone is widely recognized as a sort of encapsulation of the whole of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science—and Wisdom (Sophia) can easily be discerned as the foundation, “standing behind” the science of the spirit. So our intention here will be to further penetrate the surface text of the

¹ Having survived the fire that destroyed the first Goetheanum, the sculpture stands today—actually incomplete.

Foundation Stone Meditation to unveil the BEING of Wisdom, Isis/Sophia, who must become the intimate companion of every serious student of the New Mysteries in our time.

Before addressing the Foundation Stone Meditation itself, let us briefly recall some of what we know about Isis/Sophia as she was presented in the mystery school traditions of the past, looking through the lens of the modern mysteries. To begin we will continue to consider the sculpture mentioned above: The Representative of Humanity. In his presentation of a “new Isis myth” Rudolf Steiner said of this sculpture: “...the statue was in fact only the veil for an invisible statue. But the invisible statue remained unnoticed, *for it was the new Isis, the Isis of the new age.*”² In like manner, as the sculptural group depicting Christ as The Representative of Humanity is, in the words of Rudolf Steiner, “only the veil for an invisible statue,” let us explore the idea that the Foundation Stone Meditation, recognized as the inspired *words* of the Christ, is similarly *only a veil for Isis/Sophia*.

The sculptural group whose central figure is Christ has an inscription below it reading: “I am the Human Being, I am the Past, Present and Future. Every mortal should lift my veil.” We understand this inscription to be a modern version of a similar inscription that existed in the shrine of Isis at Sais, Egypt below a veiled statue of Isis that was employed in this mystery center as part of the ritual initiation practices of antiquity. Below *this* statue one could read: “I am the All, I am the Past, Present and the Future; no mortal has yet lifted my veil.” This inscription reveals, among other things, the need for initiation to confer immortality and the limited access to the mystery wisdom of Isis/Sophia prior to the Christ event we refer to as the Mystery of Golgotha.

Adding another image to our discussion, let us look at what is described in The Revelations of Jesus Christ to St. John, the final book in the Holy Bible. In chapter twelve we read:

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars [...] and she being with child cried, travailing in birth [...] and she brought forth a man-child who was to rule the nations with an iron rod...

What John saw, here described, certainly is a marvel: a being of vast dimensions, reaching the stars, and with tremendous significance—bearing “a child who was to rule the nations.” How are we to comprehend this immense, enigmatic being of cosmic proportions?

The keys to comprehending this second image, the Isis/Sophia seen and spoken of by St. John (who, incidentally, was one of the leading inspirers of the Foundation Stone Meditation and in fact provided the esoteric foundation of the new mysteries³) are in the Foundation Stone itself, as we have been saying —“invisibly hidden behind the words.” Let us explore just a few of the several

² Rudolf Steiner, *The Legend of the New Isis*, Dornach, January 6, 1918

³ In a later incarnation as the founder of the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross he laid the esoteric groundwork for Anthroposophical Spiritual Science.

keys embedded in the descriptions of these two images that can unlock the door to a relationship with the being of Sophia who lives within or behind The Foundation Stone Meditation.

First, we see in the statue of Isis/Sophia at Sais the same reference to time as we see in the Representative of Humanity with the words: "I am the Past, the Present and the Future." Reflecting upon this we might say: "*Here time becomes space*," to quote Gurnemantz speaking to the young Parsifal about entering the environs of the Grail Castle.⁴ When we gaze at Isis/Sophia we see "the Past, the Present and the Future," since she IS the past, present and future. In these two images is evoked a tableau, a span of time reaching from eternity past to eternity future. By this we understand the majestic woman who was shown to John as a cosmic being not limited by time: immeasurably old as the stars and containing in her womb a being who calls up the distant future — "ruling the nations with an iron rod." To encounter Isis/Sophia as a tableau of time, as a timeless being, is to take a step as Parsifal did onto the "holy ground" of the environs of the Grail Castle, "where time becomes space."⁵

We will notice in these images (Rudolf Steiner's sculpture of Christ, the vision of John and Isis/Sophia at Sais) referring to time: past, present and future—what is alluded to in the Foundation Stone Meditation with the words: Practice Spirit *Recollection*, Practice Spirit *Awareness* and Practice Spirit *Beholding*. Here we see the possibility of "recollecting" the *past*, of awareness in the *present*, and "beholding" the *future*. With these words, Christ beckons us to see the tableau of the past, present and future. We can understand this tableau to be what one must encounter at the gate of the spiritual world, which is one of the first elements one encounters on the path of initiation. One will have the experience of seeing the tableau of one's life (past, present and future), which is a microcosmic expression of the larger tableau that shows us the being of Isis/Sophia. These spirit visions occur simultaneously. They can be seen, both when we see behind the veil of the sculptural group—The Representative of Humanity—and when we see behind the veil of the words of the Foundation Stone Meditation.

Secondly, the "woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" is a picture of three "worlds" that refer to "the sun sphere," the "moon sphere," and the sphere of the twelve living beings — "the Zodiac sphere," also referred to as the sphere of the "fixed stars." These spheres are none other than the spheres of imagination, inspiration and intuition. As much as we see the cosmic spheres imaginatively depicted in Isis/Sophia existing in distant cosmic space, we must also be able to see them as part of the human constitution as the basis for our will, feelings, and thoughts—in our limbs, abdomen and head.

We will notice cross-references to these aspects of Isis/Sophia as pictured by St. John in the following verses of the Foundation Stone Meditation: "Thou livest in the limbs," "Thou livest in

⁴ In Richard Wagner's libretto for the opera Parsifal, which Rudolf Steiner called significant by the fact that it adds to our understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha.

⁵ For a further elaboration and explanation of this concept see the author's article entitled *Archangel Michael, How Can We Know Him: Part III, Spiritualizing the Knowledge of Space*, which may be found at: https://www.academia.edu/4738460/Archangel_Michael_How_Can_We_Know_Him_Part_III_Spiritualizing_the_Knowledge_of_Space or at: <http://www.anthroposophy.org/articles/>.

the beat of heart and lung,” and “Thou livest in the resting head.” These references are further represented in the corresponding sections of the Meditation with the words “in the Wielding Will of World Creating...thou wilt truly live,” “In balance of soul...thou wilt truly *feel*,” and “In stillness of thought...thou wilt truly *think* in human Spirit Foundations.”

So we see that the references to the three parts of the human constitution identified by Rudolf Steiner: the limb system, the rhythmic system, and the head system—are found in the first three sections of the Foundation Stone Meditation. Each of these sections that begins with a call to the “Soul of Man,” corresponds to the three spheres of cosmic life expressed in the being of Isis/Sophia, who is a composite being—a unifying and harmonizing being. These three realms of Isis/Sophia are further identified as corresponding to the realms of the work of the Divine Trinity: “The *Father* Spirit of the Heights,” “The *Christ* Will in the encircling round,” and “The World Thoughts of the *Spirit*.” These realms in turn are populated by the nine hierarchies, identified also in the corresponding first three sections of the Foundation Stone Meditation: “Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones,” in the sphere of the stars; “Kyriotetes, Dynamis, Exusiai,” in the Sun sphere; and “Archai, Archangeloi and Angeloi” in the Moon sphere. Here we see a further elaboration of the elements of the composite being of Isis/Sophia afforded by the New Mysteries found in the Foundation Stone Meditation.

Through this elaboration of elements we are being introduced to the complex “physiological” structure of Isis/Sophia. What is especially remarkable in the meditation is that no clear distinction is made between the physical human being bounded by our skin, as we know ourselves in everyday consciousness, and this stupendous universal being of Sophia who, as we said, is practically incomprehensible! This Meditation, in its structure, is meant to be a vehicle to experience the meaning of Anthroposophy in its entirety, which by definition seeks to “unite the spiritual in the human being with the spiritual in the cosmos.” The meeting with the spiritual in the cosmos IS the meeting with Isis/Sophia the exalted goal of all mystery teaching and practice since ancient times.

The New Mysteries, as noted earlier, speak of Isis/Sophia as an accessible, present reality: “I am the Human Being, I am the Past, Present and Future. *Every mortal should lift my veil*” (emphasis mine). This is possible today as a result of the stupendous cosmic mystery-deed that occurred on Golgotha hill—as St. Paul says to Timothy: “This grace was given us in Christ Jesus [...] it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”⁶

We mentioned earlier that Sophia is “a unifying and harmonizing being,” a being who is identified by Pavel Florensky, the renowned Russian philosopher and theologian of Sophia, as *Omnia Conjuncto* —“She who unites all.” If we understand knowledge correctly, if we allow knowledge to be as profound and



Mother of the World
Nicholas Roerich

⁶ New Testament, II Timothy 1:9-10

pervasive as it ought to be, we won't count ourselves as real knowers until we understand ourselves and the universe in a *Sophianic* way. To accomplish this we must be able to enter into the Foundation Stone Meditation in a real and living way, uniting and harmonizing all of the elements referred to—the human and cosmic elements. If we take this challenge seriously we will discover that we are “poor in spirit.” Being poor in spirit is a condition that invokes the mood of questioning called by Rudolf Steiner “the Parsifal mood,” the key to the door of the Grail Castle, which alone can open us to the *reality* of the comprehensive science of the spirit—that consists not merely of spiritual ideas and abstractions—but the spiritual beings who are the foundation of human and cosmic existence.

The Foundation Stone Meditation is a sort of paean to Isis/Sophia—an exalted, joyful participation in her Being. It leads us directly to her from the first words: “Soul of Man/Thou livest in the limbs/That bear thee through the world of space/ Into the spirit's ocean of being.” As we contemplate it, we are set squarely before the towering cosmic being that is Isis/Sophia with the knowledge that as we gaze upon her we are in truth also gazing upon a cosmic picture of ourselves. In this knowing, though we stand so tiny at her feet, we can simultaneously expand and ascend to a greater experience—a true encounter with Isis/Sophia. We can unite with her in all her majestic beauty and nobility, feeling the grand sweeping orbits of the Earth, the Moon, the Sun and the Zodiac, spiral upon spiral—as movements in our own bodies, embraced in her bosom with the enlivening power of cosmic/human will, feeling and thinking—uniting the heights, the breadths and the depths in us. Such is the objective of this Meditation—to know the living hierarchical beings that inhabit our Pan-Wisdom, which is to say our bodies.

Let us now expand upon the correspondence of the Foundation Stone Meditation with the image of Isis/Sophia from the Revelations of St. John by examining the remainder of the text, which says of the heavenly woman Isis/Sophia “...and she being with child cried, travailing in birth[...] and she brought forth a man-child who was to rule the nations with an iron rod[....]” We will compare the spirit of these words with the spirit of the fourth stanza of the Foundation Stone Meditation, which begins “At the turning point of time/The Spirit Light of Worlds/Entered the Stream of Earthly Being.” With these words describing a birth taking place, and with spirit vision, we can see the fruit of the wisdom of this great being who encompasses all the wisdom of the mysteries. Out of her deep wisdom and compassion, the “grace and truth”⁷ that is characteristic of the new mysteries, which are a culmination and a fulfillment of all of the hopes and aspirations of previous mystery traditions, something is born. Modern spiritual science is the culmination of the teaching of the mysteries of previous ages. Out of it, when properly applied, grow new human capacities, capacities that resemble those of the earliest initiates who were priest-kings. These priest-kings were gifted as an elite class of men and women with the cosmic wisdom to rule their nations. It was a wisdom that united heavenly with earthly knowledge.

⁷ We are referring to the characterization St. John gave to “the Word made flesh” that “dwelt among us.” John says: “...the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” The law was truth without grace; therefore the new mysteries are a reflection of both truth and grace, or wisdom and compassion. Quotations from The Gospel of John, chapter 1.

Today this heavenly and earthly knowledge is being born out of the modern mysteries in the form of human beings imbued with the reality of spiritual science who embody both the “light that warms simple shepherds’ hearts” and the “light that enlightens the wise heads of kings” (quoting from the fourth stanza of the FSM). It is the modern emergence of human beings who resemble the priest/king initiates of the past. But today they are not an elite class, but rather a segment of humanity called to represent all people—representatives of humanity. In this they resemble their mother (Isis/Mary/Sophia) who is called “the mother of all peoples.”

At the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, the fulfillment of the goals of mystery wisdom was born on Earth in an extraordinary way when Jesus of Nazareth became the Messiah, the anointed one, at the baptism by John in the river Jordan—when the Christ being descended upon him, seen imaginatively as a dove. This was the birth of Christ on earth. St. Paul calls Jesus Christ “the first-born of many brethren.” Despite the fact that Isis/Mary/Sophia did give birth to Christ Jesus, this birth is nevertheless not what the vision of John is referring to as a “man-child.” John’s vision points to the future—to our time when the fruits of spiritual scientific wisdom are beginning to take root—fruits that are as yet not mature. The child we are referring to is a corporate human being that is born out of a relationship with Christ and Sophia—a community. The fruit of the wisdom of the mysteries was fully mature in Jesus Christ, mature enough to live out its life unto death—overcoming death. The wisdom that was mature in Christ is far from being mature in the children of the mysteries in our time. They will only reach a modest level of maturity in the sixth cultural epoch, some 3500 years from now. These mature children will “rule the nations” when spiritual knowledge is ripe enough in a sufficient number of individuals to produce a consensus such as what exists today in the natural scientific community.⁸ This consensus will be based on a science of the spirit that will embrace all the earthly sciences elevating them to the noble aims of the spirit. At this time spiritual science will replace and transform materialistic natural science.

Referring back to the Biblical text, which speaks of a “man-child” being born of Isis/Sophia, let us attempt to further penetrate the meaning of this strange being called a man-child, which we have just begun to illuminate. How can this being be both a man and a child? It is a child because it is an offspring of the *new* mysteries; it might be called the “first fruits”⁹ of the cosmic wisdom that comes with the return of Christ in the etheric in our time. It is also “a child” since it has been connected to the cosmic youth forces—what Rudolf Steiner calls the “great vivifying, vitalizing power of the Nathan Jesus-child.”¹⁰ Without these forces, humanity cannot rise from the old to the new mysteries. This man-child is therefore youthful, while it possesses a mature wisdom. It possesses the strength of the wisdom of the old mysteries, which is like iron that will rule *in the future*. The man-child is not ready to rule the nations, but it *will be* ready in the before-mentioned sixth cultural epoch, which the scripture refers to as the time of “Philadelphia,” the church of human love.

⁸ For more on this subject see the pamphlet *Preparing for the Sixth Epoch*, a lecture by Rudolf Steiner given in Dusseldorf, June 15, 1915, GA 159. Available in the Rudolf Steiner Archive: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19150615p01.html>, or at <https://steiner.presswarehouse.com/Books/Features.aspx>

⁹ See *The Holy Bible*, Revelation 14:4 for characteristics of the “first fruits.”

¹⁰ Rudolf Steiner: Gospel of Luke cycle, Lecture IV; GA 114.

What does all this have to do with the Foundation Stone Meditation? If we contemplate the first three sections of the meditation, which refer to the tripartite being of Isis/Sophia made transparent to the human soul, we can get a picture of the mature mysteries—of the soul of man comprehending its universal constitution—as a being of both Heaven AND Earth. In the Representative of Humanity, the gestures of the arms and hands (left raised, right lowered) speak of the middle path between Heaven and Earth. In the Foundation Stone the same gestures are intimated with the words in Stanza I: “Let there ring out from the Heights/What in the Depths is echoed”; in Stanza II: “Practice Spirit Awareness/In balance of soul”; and in Stanza III: “Let there be prayed from the Depths/What in the Heights will be granted.” The first three stanzas are a recapitulation of the old mysteries. In antiquity, when one beheld the divine being Isis/Sophia one beheld at once the depths (moon forces)¹¹ and the heights (crown of twelve stars) in a form that at once represented unity, harmony of purpose and beauty.

If we contemplate the final (fourth) section of the Foundation Stone in the context of our discussion, we will get a picture of the NEW power that Christ has since the Mystery Golgotha to bestow the “priest/king” wisdom on those who can receive it.

At the turning point of time
The Spirit Light of Worlds
Entered the Stream of Earthly Being.
Darkness of Night had held its sway,
Day-radiant Light poured into the hearts of men.
Light that warms simple Shepherds’ Hearts,
Light that enlightens the wise Heads of Kings.

The priestly and kingly wisdom spoken of here is what was represented in the *shepherds* that beheld the newborn Jesus of the Nathan lineage (in Luke), and the three *kings* from the East that brought gifts to the Jesus child from the Solomon line (in Matthew). This wisdom pours forth from Christ at the event of the Mystery of Golgotha. And it pours forth with renewed strength in the words we are contemplating, with the founding of the new mysteries by Rudolf Steiner—through the Foundation Stone Meditation. What is born out of the Foundation Stone, behind the veil of the language, what is born of Isis/Sophia, is a *young* child of the *mature* mysteries—a child who will eventually bear a scepter or staff of iron. The Greek word used for “staff” or “rod,” which we have quoted from Revelations 12, is the same word that is used in Revelations, chapter 11, verse 1, for a measuring device to measure the temple of God. In John’s own words: “And was given to me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood saying: Rise and measure the temple of God...” So this staff of iron can indicate both a *scepter* and a *ruler* or measuring device, giving a special meaning to the phrase “who will *rule* the nations.”¹²

Students of spiritual science will recognize in the reference to “a rod of iron” the strength that Archangel Michael bestows upon those who are schooled by him. Archangel Michael is the *ruler*

¹¹ The moon forces, despite their appearance above the Earth, represent the greatest depths of Earth, since because of the density of its substance it was removed from the Earth during the Lemurian Period of the Earth’s development.

¹² While rarely used in this sense today, the original meaning of “ruler” had this same connotation.

of cosmic intelligence who stands at the right hand of Christ and is the exalted inspirer of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science. He is the leading messenger of the Christ being in the spiritual world. The content of spiritual science, we might say, is built up from spiritual iron, the strength of initiation wisdom. It is a wisdom this is not like ordinary earthly wisdom; it is wisdom that has fallen to earth to die and be reborn in the human “I” as love.¹³ It is divine wisdom and love made human—the stuff out of which the Temple of Humanity is built, which is why Rudolf Steiner sometimes called the Foundation Stone the “Foundation Stone of Love.”

And this “stone of love” is founded in good deeds, which are the building blocks for the new grail temple that is being established on Earth. Therefore, the meditation ends with this prayer:

O light Divine,
O Sun of Christ,
Warm thou our hearts
Enlighten thou our heads,
That good may become
What we from our hearts do found
And our heads direct
With single purpose.

Finally, we see the intended issue of the Foundation Stone laid in the hearts of men and women for the building of the new Temple of Humanity—proceeding from deeds of wisdom and love born by those who are the children of Isis/Sophia. These deeds of wisdom and love are the result of the “light” and “warmth” bestowed by Christ, which refer to *personal* human feeling and will, raised to *impersonal*, universal, living “thought” and “meaning.” These later lay hidden behind the light and warmth since “the Fall” of humanity through the influence of Luciferic powers. Living thought and meaning are the feminine counterparts of the light and warmth ethers representing the higher feeling and will forces that were withdrawn, as the Divine Mother had been forced to withdraw, remaining in the background, largely unreachable in the Golden Land of Shambhala in the core of the Earth.

With the deed of Christ, the “tree of life,” which is another name for the higher counterparts of the warmth and light ethers, are restored to humanity since their removal at the Fall.¹⁴ It is through Christ uniting with Isis/Sophia when he descended into the depths of the Earth that our own meeting with Isis/Sophia becomes possible. Herein Christ has opened the path to Shambhala—the path to the Mother where comes the higher light and warmth ethers. Here the secret, hidden power of the Foundation Stone Meditation is revealed.

¹³ For a longer discussion of the quality and strength of initiation wisdom, see the author’s article entitled *Archangel Michael: How Can We Know Him? Part III, Spiritualizing the Knowledge of Space*. This article may be found at: <https://independent.academia.edu/BillTrusiewicz> or at: <http://www.anthroposophy.org/articles/>.

¹⁴ For a more thorough explanation of the four ethers and the tree of life see *According to Luke, Christ the Great Mystery of Earth Evolution*, Chapter 7, Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press.

A foundation stone is a stone laid as a cornerstone in a building that is meant to prefigure and initiate the higher purpose of the building and the quality of the substance of its structure, which is soul/spiritual in nature. The quality and substance of the children of Isis/Sophia are that they are young in the wisdom of the *new* mysteries that streamed in through the youthful etheric forces of the Christ,¹⁵ but bear the *ancient* wisdom, the manly iron-strong wisdom of spiritual science, and may therefore be called a “man-child.” The last (fourth) stanza of the Foundation Stone Meditation (quoted above in two parts) is dedicated to birthing this “man child” out of the cosmic being of Isis/Sophia.

In summary, behind the words of Christ given through the Foundation Stone, we can see the being of Isis/Sophia giving birth to the children of the Age of Light, the Satya Yuga, that will have a certain fulfillment in the sixth cultural epoch some 2500-3500 years from now. Sophia gives birth to these children in our time under the guardianship of Archangel Michael who is himself an offspring of Isis/Sophia,¹⁶ and is therefore our companion and brother in the work—opening the path to Shambhala. In light of this, may our work with the Foundation Stone Meditation lead to a meeting with the invisible Isis/Sophia, the Isis of the new age, who alone can inspire us to envision the future when, out of the mature wisdom of the mysteries, a “man-child will rule the nations,” bringing peace and healing to our world¹⁷ through the common knowledge of the living being of Wisdom, the Pan-Wisdom who unites all, and who, dwelling in human beings, we refer to as Anthroposophia.



Adoration of the Shepherds
James Tissot



Journey of the Magi
James Tissot

¹⁵ Who restored to humanity the “tree of life” —the sound and meaning ethers, the source of life for human hearts and heads.

¹⁶ See: *The Heavenly Sophia and the Being Anthroposophia*, Chapter 7, The Sophia and the Archangel Michael, by Sergei O. Prokofieff; Temple Lodge.

¹⁷ It is believed that a widespread knowledge of Christ will bring in an era of peace, which students of the Bible refer to as “The Millennium.”

Promise, Accomplishment, and the Encounter with the World: Some Thoughts on Three Streams

John O'Meara

In a former Michaelmas issue of *Aurore* (the Journal of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada—now defunct)¹, Denis Schneider presented us with two of the world's greatest works of art: the *Sistine Madonna* by Raphael and the early *Pietà* by Michelangelo. Denis Schneider called our attention to Raphael's *Madonna* as an image of the promise in which our lives unfold from the time of our pre-birth existence; he presented the *Pietà* by Michelangelo, on the other hand, as an image of what we take with us into the afterlife by way of spiritual accomplishments in this world. In the present article I would like to build on these remarkable insights by adding to these two great works another that our notions of threefoldness will readily accommodate—the *Virgin of the Rocks*, by Leonardo da Vinci. And I would like to place a third idea between promise and accomplishment: that of the encounter with the world.

In *Rosicrucianism and Modern Initiation*, Rudolf Steiner portrays a scene of instruction between a pupil and a master who would appear to have been Christian Rosenkreutz two centuries before he was given his name.² To the pupil's desire to penetrate the physical world, the master responds **first** by taking him up a very high mountain from which the pupil experiences his life on earth as something he had dreamed. The whole experience finally prompts the pupil to say: "Only when one is transplanted far away from the earthly into the heights of the ether, there to comprehend the ether-heights with the help of the power of childhood ... only then does one understand revelation aright" (31). In a **second** stage of instruction the master takes the pupil to a cave through which they pass to deep inner clefts, far down below the surface of the earth. From his experience in these polar regions, the pupil concludes differently: "Now has the earth, in which I have been incarnated, at last really spoken through the things and processes of Nature ..." (33). Thus from the "revelation of religion" on the one hand and the "revelation of nature" on the other, the master draws the following additional task: "If you can now succeed in illuminating what your soul has felt in the hollow clefts of the earth with the light your soul has brought with it from the mountain, then you will attain wisdom." Rudolf Steiner puts it to us in yet another way:

One perceives on the one hand that which is high above Earth man, and on the other that which is deep down below Earth man, and these two have to meet in man's inner being. Then man can find within his own being the power of God the Creator (34).

I would say that the *Sistine Madonna* by Raphael continues to reflect the first experience described above, while the second is reflected in da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks*. I would also propose that the *meeting* of the two experiences is in some measure reflected in each of these

¹ See Volume 3, no.1.

² Rudolf Steiner sets this scene sometime before the end of the 12th century. Christian Rosenkreutz was not given his name until his incarnation in the 14th century.



Sistine Madonna



Virgin of the Rocks



Adoration of the Magi



Pythagoras from *The School of Athens*

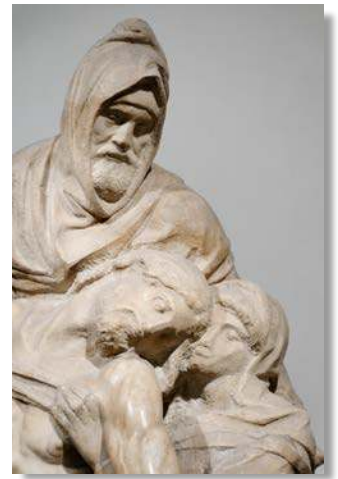
paintings, from opposite sides as it were. A very large gap remains, however, between these two paintings on the one hand and the *Pietà* by Michelangelo on the other. That gap corresponds to the whole life of Christ Jesus that falls in between. We are familiar with the main points of this life, from the time the Zarathustra-ego first enters the Nathan Jesus, through the Baptism when the Christ incorporates into this Jesus and the Zarathustra-ego departs from him, and the further events involving Christ Jesus down to His Passion and Death. Between the main polarities of promise and accomplishment, then, I would add a third experience or set of experiences, which we may call “the encounter with the world.”

For this I would choose no specific picture, because here it is a question of how each of us finds a relationship with the whole life, passion, and death of Christ Jesus, both alone and together.

Yet the Renaissance itself offers us a tremendous—if greatly diffused—picture of this crucial encounter, when we take the whole production of its three greatest artists into account. It is certainly no coincidence that Raphael, da Vinci, and Michelangelo all appear in roughly the same period and are for a time all incarnated together. We know from Sergei Prokofieff’s research (in *Eternal Individuality*) of Raphael’s spiritual association with the Nathan Jesus. I would like to imagine a similar association in the case of da Vinci and the Zarathustra-individuality. One of da Vinci’s most famous works is the unfinished *Adoration of the Magi*, from which Raphael took inspiration for the figures that encircle Pythagoras (in the left-hand corner) in his painting *The School of Athens*. In the fifth century B.C. Pythagoras was a pupil of Zarathos, a later incarnation of Zarathustra. With both da Vinci and Michelangelo also included in Raphael’s painting along with a portrait of himself, *The School of Athens* offers us a form of total picture on which we may draw for initiative.³ As for Michelangelo, Mario Betti, in *The Sophia Mystery in our Time* (47ff), has called our attention to the associations between his early *Pietà* and the Grail stream. It may be no coincidence that in a later and less well-known *Pietà*, Michelangelo has sculpted himself in the place of the Joseph of Arimathea who supports the dead Christ, and we know of Joseph of Arimathea’s own association with the Grail stream.

³ See the reproduction of the full painting on page 51. DaVinci appears in the righthand corner of Raphael’s painting, holding a ball (the Earth) in his right hand; Raphael appears in a black hat to Da Vinci’s left peering out at the viewer, while an idealized Michelangelo, looking like one of his own figures in the Sistine ceiling, appears in the immediate foreground, left-center. The two figures at the very center of the painting are usually identified as Plato and Aristotle.

If, as Denis Schneider has argued, the mystery of promise is being carried in our movement today by the Platonists among us, in association with an image like that offered by Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*, while the mystery of accomplishment is being carried by the Aristotelians, in association with an image like that of the early *Pietà* of Michelangelo, then the mystery of our *meeting*, on which the fulfilment of our greater Sophianic-Anthroposophical movement depends, would appear to lie in a shared, if still undefined, comprehensive *encounter with the world*, which the image of da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks* begins to imply. That in da Vinci's painting the *two* Jesus children are represented is, by now, a well-known fact, if no less astonishing for that⁴; the relationship this painting suggests between these children is indeed very striking. If we can assume da Vinci's special inner relationship to the Zarathustra-individuality, then it seems reasonable to suppose that the Jesus-child who is especially highlighted in this painting must be the Zarathustra- (or Solomon-) Jesus, and that this child is the one to the Virgin's left over whom She has placed Her hand in holy benediction. The other (Nathan) Jesus, who seems to stand somewhat outside the painting's main subject, the Virgin corrals as if directing Him towards the other. Astonishingly, each Jesus is represented as if he had begun to embody some of the characteristic traits of the other. This is what makes the painting especially striking. The Zarathustra or kingly Jesus sits, as if on a throne, and he also gestures royally with his right hand⁵, but he also bears in his form some of that unshaped (unfallen) human potential that one rather associates with the Nathan Jesus for whom his incarnation was his very first. On the other hand, the Nathan-Jesus, who is of priestly lineage, is in a contrastingly prayerful or beseeching attitude, yet similarly bears some of that solid sense of orientation in the physical world of the Zarathustra-Jesus, gained from many previous incarnations. From this we may gather da Vinci's far more complex idea of the extraordinary interrelationship between the two Jesuses, in comparison, say, with the pupils from his school who were privy to his secret.⁶ In da Vinci's painting, the Nathan-Jesus kneels as if supplicating the Solomon-Jesus (i.e., Zarathustra): the Nathan soul's dependence on Zarathustra seems in this way to be emphasized, as if da Vinci were (unconsciously) noting that the Nathan soul could not evolve further without the power of action reserved to Zarathustra. On the other hand, the angel-figure sitting behind the Zarathustra child points back to the Nathan-Jesus as if to say that the full evolution will depend on the Nathan soul.⁷



Michelangelo's late *Pietà*

The story of Jesus's life, from the time the Zarathustra ego and the Nathan soul are first working together up to the time of Christ's entry, offers a first focus of significant analogy for that more comprehensive "encounter with the world" that I am arguing should be engaging us within our

⁴ See Bobby Matherne's book review of David Ovason's *The Two Children*: <http://www.doyletics.com/arj/twochild.shtml>.

⁵ The characteristic gesture of the Jesus child as presented in traditional paintings of the Adoration of the Magi, in contrast with the more flaccid pose and the supine posture of the Jesus child in paintings of the Adoration of the Shepherds.

⁶ Among which are Marco d'Oggiono (see his *Madonna and Child with the Infant St. John*), and Bernardino Luini (*Holy Family with the Infant St. John*).

⁷ There is more on the two Jesuses in this painting in the Postscript below, which appears after the Postlude.

movement today. The first impulse of encounter with the world is provided by the Zarathustra Individuality, for it is by his power of action that the Nathan Jesus is carried out into the world. *Who, then, does this power of encounter characterize in our movement today?* Primarily this power of encounter is a power of suffering, as we learn from Rudolf Steiner's account of Jesus of Nazareth's life (in *The Fifth Gospel*). Grieving bitterly over the forms of decadence of his own day, Jesus of Nazareth could only sorrow over the fact that no one could share with him his sense of the value the former mysteries had once had, or how far they had degenerated, or what appalling misery their neglect had bred. The pious practices of the Essenes, on the other hand, grieved him no less, for as Steiner has reported to us, "he could not endure the thought of any spiritual treasure which could not be shared by all mankind but could only belong to a few at the cost of the rest" (*The Fifth Gospel* 127). This comment we might refer especially to the relationship that our movement, and almost any group within that movement, may or may not have with the rest of suffering humanity today. All the sense for our future redemption that the Nathan-Jesus carried in himself needed in the first instance the power of encounter and suffering that the Zarathustra ego exercises. The further transformation of suffering into love is what the Nathan-soul appears to accomplish as his own task. To this power of love Christ adds His own supreme work of redemption, which is throughout the course of His life, from the time of the Baptism onwards, also inseparable from suffering. The Christ Being would build on the suffering that Zarathustra had accumulated and left behind in his bodily sheaths:

The suffering endured by Christ during the three years when His Being was gradually penetrating into the human sheaths was infinitely greater than all the suffering and pain Jesus of Nazareth had experienced through the stages of his development. It was unceasing, perpetual pain, but pain that was transmuted into Love, infinite, ever-deepening Love (159).

Many analogies from this life present themselves for our own time. Thus, if the Platonists in our movement are associated in the promise they offer with an image like Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*, and so with the Nathan soul, then their sense of promise can only germinate in the soil of suffering encounter of the kind that once characterized the Zarathustra ego. The bearers of this spirit of encounter do not appear to be identified among our ranks today, but it is they who encounter the world as Zarathustra once did. It is as if we were asked to think of a group soul that we have yet to recognize or to establish among ourselves, though this group soul represents our crucial link to the present state of the outside world. The Platonists would have the additional task of transmuting suffering into love; in the last analysis they build, with the Nathan soul, on the transmuting love of the Risen Christ.

The Aristotelians, on their side, likewise build on the whole process, working more out of the future—with transmuting forces that only become fully active after death, as suggested in their association with the (early) *Pietà* of Michelangelo (these are Denis Schneider's ideas). The Aristotelians, especially, build on the power that the Christ has gained in suffering death, and should be linked back to the Grail stream. They belong to the philosophic stream to which Aquinas belonged, whose crucial encounter with the Grail stream at one point in his life is recounted by Rudolf Steiner in his karma lectures.

Strange as it may appear, the Aristotelians are also the great synthesizers: they are to be associated with the achievements of art, along with Michelangelo. The Platonists, with Raphael, carry forward the achievements of religion, while those who express the achievements of Zarathustra work on in the spirit of science—in the spirit of da Vinci, who (anticipating Goethe) was working out a new notion of the same necessity for both science and art.⁸ Amongst themselves, Raphael, da Vinci, and Michelangelo express the Rosicrucian synthesis of religion, science, and art to the diffuse extent to which this could be expressed in their time. Raphael's *School of Athens*, which includes a representation of the artists themselves, is a reflection of this total effort, characterizing all three artists seen working together at this time.



Michelangelo
(an idealized portrait)

Before them, Rosenkreutz accomplishes the synthesis alone; it was a question then of bringing together without art “the revelation of religion” on the one hand and the “revelation of nature” on the other (see my previous article in the Advent 2015 issue of *Starlight*). Michelangelo, as the spiritual representative of art, in this respect symbolizes the *new* addition in the Renaissance.



Raphael (second from right)
and da Vinci (left)

Beyond the *School of Athens* lies Rembrandt's *Polish Rider*⁹ in which Rosenkreutz, after more recently inspiring the synthesis of religion, science, and art, has himself become the object of art. Then follows, in the next century, Goethe's *Rosicrucian Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*—and so the beginnings of the movement which finds its fulfilment in the life work of Rudolf Steiner, who carries the great synthesis of science, religion, and art forward into our own age.

⁸ See Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (157): “neither in art nor in science does Leonardo admit even the slightest subjective arbitrariness.”

⁹ See my article in the Advent 2015 issue of *Starlight* for a reproduction of this painting.

Within these tremendous pictures of our evolving humanity, one aspect of the process seems to me to be especially crucial for our movement today. What in our time we are neglecting is the critical connection that our evolution has always had with a *spirit that suffers the encounter with the world*, in association with the spirit of science. Only in the context of such striving will that fateful meeting in the work of Platonists and Aristotelians take place, on which Steiner said the whole immediate future of the anthroposophical mission depends.

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that such a spirit is identical with mere scientific striving alone, or even with those initiatives of a more overtly spiritual-scientific nature as we know these within the anthroposophical movement today. Nothing much will emerge in those terms, I believe, without a further grounding in the legacy of Zarathustra as the man of sorrows who, through *his* science, suffers a relation to the whole world in all of its depths. It is how we should finally see the *spirit* of science. The sources of this power of encounter seem to lie beyond our imagining at present, but they are already strongly suggested by the great painters of old who, in almost everything, have always been our first teachers (in more recent times). And so in da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks* the Zarathustra-individuality (as the Solomon Jesus) significantly rests with his left hand against the rock that plummets down beneath him whence his forces are derived. He expresses in himself, that is to say, the potential for a full encounter with the world's depths, and so rounds out the powers that stream to us on the one side out of the heights (through the Nathan soul and the Platonists) and on the other out of the world's ends (through the Aristotelians in Christ). The *Polish Rider* by Rembrandt, as well as his other painting of Rosenkreutz, the *Man in Armour*¹⁰, continue this representation of the depths in the history of painting, while Goethe's *Tale* does so in the realm of literature. Rudolf Steiner's Mystery Plays should also be considered in this series of representations of the spirit of suffering encounter, from which we have still much to learn.¹¹

Postlude



Jesus and His Mother
Gerard David

One moment in the life of Jesus of Nazareth will surely be of special inspiration to us as we approach the challenges that await us both in the near and the farther future. It is that extraordinary moment of conversation which Jesus has with his mother, the Solomon Mary, on approaching the end of his mission in his thirtieth year, after his many trials of soul (see *The Fifth Gospel* 82ff, also 128ff ¹²). With her, Jesus in this moment shares everything he has suffered with an intensity that passes directly into her soul. Rudolf Steiner tells us that it is by virtue of this very act of sharing his suffering with her, in which “the meaning of the evolution of humanity was expressed” (132) that the Zarathustra

¹⁰ Reproduced in my article in the Advent 2015 issue of *Starlight*.

¹¹ See, on these Plays, my monograph: *The Spirit of Encounter*. Ottawa: HcP Ottawa, 2000 (available from the Rudolf Steiner Library, Hudson NY).

¹² By then the Zarathustra ego had been living in the body of the Nathan Jesus for 18 years. The Nathan Mary had died at the time of the merging of this ego with the body of Jesus 18 years earlier.

ego makes way for the entry of the Christ. Simultaneously the soul-and-spirit being of the bodily mother of the Nathan Jesus boy also pours into the soul of the Solomon Mary. We can only marvel at the great power of empathy that the Solomon Mary thus expresses in this very great moment of transference and transition, which suddenly brings the powers of both Christ and Sophia directly into operation. It is a great capacity for sharing suffering that brings this about, directly in the case of Jesus, vicariously or reflectively in the case of Mary. In this way the powers of spirit and soul in each of us are powerfully configured, which effect the transition to the greater work in the world of Christ and Sophia in which we hope to share. But it may be that one or another of us in our movement will at some point have one role or the other to take up – sufferer or patient listener – as befits a truly shared experience. Certainly nothing greater in the way of the direct influence of Christ and Sophia seems possible without our consciously working at developing such capacities. We know at the same time that we go out to meet a world that more and more today demands more than our own powers alone in meeting the challenges it poses.

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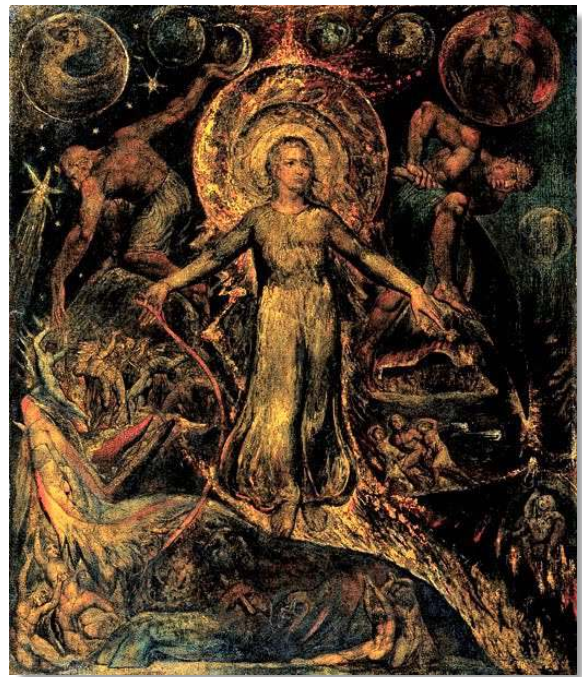
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Postscript

Andrew Linnell has put forward a totally opposite view of the two Jesuses in the da Vinci painting (at <http://thechristianmysteries.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/DaVinci-Madonna-of-the-Rocks-Article-23Nov12.pdf>, p.11), namely, that the Jesus to Mary's left is the Nathan Jesus and that to her right the Solomon-Jesus. Apart from the fact that it seems impossible to imagine the kingly, all-knowing Zarathustra-individuality assuming a supplicating position, Linnell considers as decisive evidence strictly spatial painterly considerations such as the fact that the rock pillars in the openings above the Jesus children show differences: there are many pillars above the head of the Jesus to the Virgin's right, while there is only one such pillar above the other Jesus. On this basis Linnell concludes that the Jesus to the Virgin's right has had many incarnations and is hence the Zarathustra-child, while for the other Jesus, identified as the Nathan-Jesus, this is his first incarnation. This argument should strike us as a rather abstractly symbolic basis for identifying the two Jesuses. I have offered my own criteria above for my interpretation as to which Jesus is which, based on more inward considerations. *It is especially when* one has Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* in mind to compare that one is bound to conclude that the deep earthly setting of the da Vinci painting, over which the Jesus to the Virgin's left presides, could not be proper to the heavenly Nathan Jesus who is indisputably Raphael's subject in his painting. There is, in this context, also da Vinci's unfinished masterpiece, *The Adoration of the Magi*, to consider, which I have further cited in support of my argument. This

painting seems to speak volumes as to da Vinci's inner relationship to the Zarathustra-individuality, as Raphael himself sensed, as can be seen by his importation of some of the central figures from that painting into *The School of Athens*. I have in addition called attention (see n.5) to the predominant association in the history of painting of the raised right hand of the Jesus-figure with the motif of the Adoration of the Magi (i.e., with the kingly Zarathustra child) rather than with the Adoration of the Shepherds (and the Nathan-child, who generally lies passive and supine in *his* characteristic nature of perfect innocence)¹³. Finally, taking a strictly logical approach: Would it make sense for da Vinci, after having come into the knowledge of the two Jesuses, to make of the "other" Jesus a secondary subject in this painting? The "other" Jesus in this case would be the one who was generally less popular – not the heavenly child who is visited by shepherds "tending the fields by night," but rather the child of the day and the earthly realm, who was visited by the Magi.



Scene from a painting by William Blake.
Jesus of the Earthly Realm is the name given
 by John O'Meara to this scene.

Final Note

As for my comment above on p.50 about a third group soul that needs to be identified, apart from the Platonists and the Aristotelians in our movement today, my forthcoming article will suggest that this third group soul may well be found among the disciples of Peter Deunov, at least in their original inspiration, when still under his immediate guidance, and what survives of this today. See above:

The bearers of this spirit of encounter do not appear to be identified among our ranks today, but it is they who encounter the world as Zarathustra once did. It is as if we were asked to think of a group soul that we have yet to recognize or to establish among ourselves, though this group soul represents our crucial link to the present state of the outside world.

¹³ Not that generally painters were aware that two Jesus-children were concerned. Moreover, even when painters such as those in da Vinci's school knew that they were painting the two Jesus children, one of these continues to be presented as John the Baptist (as in the titles given to the paintings mentioned above in n.6, by Oggiono and Luini; there would appear to be something of the sort also in da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks*). Representing the other Jesus as John the Baptist served to conform to the Church's official notion that there was only one Jesus.

August 21, 2017—the Great American Solar Eclipse Challis, Idaho

Estelle Isaacson

The Message of Nicodemus After the Eclipse

During the eclipse, a certain friend came to join with us in our beholding of this very significant event—the individuality of Nicodemus, who lived later in the Ninth Century as the Grail King Anfortas. As you know, Nicodemus was a secret disciple of Jesus Christ. He was a Pharisee, and he came to meet with the Master at night. The subject of their nightly conversations is what we could call the “wisdom of the stars.” Others came to join these conversations. The circle numbered seven. But from time to time others came to converse and hear the teachings Jesus could give only in secret. They also can be called “night disciples” because, with their special relationship to Christ, they were able to meet with Him in the night while they were asleep. Their souls would rise and meet in the vast starry realms, where they were given great wisdom—wisdom hardly ever before penetrated or heard. Some of this wisdom came forth centuries later in various forms through the individuals who had received it. We are not going to explore that particular history at this time; rather, let us turn our minds and hearts to this individuality, Nicodemus, who wants to bring us a message in light. In relation to the powerful event that took place just hours ago, I will speak what he brings as he shows it to me.

* * * * *

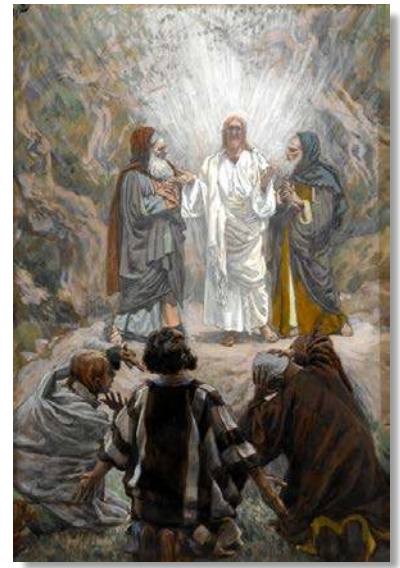
I am given to speak of the Holy Grail. There is a Heavenly Grail and an Earthly Grail. The Grail may be found in the Earth as well as in the Heavens. There is a Heavenly Wisdom, which issues from the Heavenly Grail; and there is an Earthly Wisdom, which issues unceasingly from the Earthly Grail. During the eclipse you, in your work together in community, became a chalice of reception for what was streaming from the Heavenly Grail. At the same time you were also receiving what was streaming from the Earthly Grail as you stood between Heaven and Earth, connecting the two through your words, your gestures, your beholding, and your open hearts. Because the vessel is prepared, you may receive from that fount.

* * * * *

Jesus Christ in his First Coming taught the night disciples many things. They were able to ask him the deeper questions, and he would answer. They would take their questions into their sleep, lift them up to him, and he would come to meet them. One of the questions concerned the Lord’s Transfiguration. They had heard from Peter, James and John their eyewitness account of what took place in the night on Mt. Tabor. These three, who were the only witnesses, had had to develop courage in their hearts in order to follow the Master up the Mount.

Christ Jesus asked them to come with him, as is written in Scripture, and they went—and so did it come to pass, because they obligingly went up the Mount, that they witnessed Christ revealing himself in his brilliant radiance—brighter than the noonday Sun—at the midnight hour. *This was for them like a reversal of what was experienced today, when the noonday Sun was occluded, and all went dark.*

When Christ transfigured himself before the three disciples, all became light. Not only was the Earth bathed in light and revealed to their sight in such-wise that they saw the plants and animals and minerals and rocks, indeed the whole landscape bathed in light. Not only this, but the Heavens were also unveiled to their sight, and they saw angels, archangels, the Patriarchs, and of these especially Moses and Elijah, who revealed themselves in this brilliant light. This was when Christ unveiled himself and allowed his true brilliance to bless the Earth. Peter, James, and John were witnesses of this great light, which was like experiencing the Sun in the midnight hour!



The Transfiguration
James Tissot

One would think that Peter, James, and John would be forever transformed by such an experience, that they would no longer be as normal human beings, but somehow ever lifted up. Would they not thereafter exhibit a higher moral strength? Would not their own faces radiate light also? And indeed, through this miracle these three individuals grew from grace to grace, as we know. But their own transfigurations were not completed through their experience of Christ's Transfiguration. Their souls required more work. But they had witnessed the True Life—Eternal Life—as a living Light raying out Love to all the world. How, after such an experience, and after having followed Christ from miracle to miracle, could Peter then deny Christ? We are not to judge Peter's soul. Let us but briefly call to mind how Peter, at his darkest hour, denied what he had witnessed, saying, "I never knew the man," and thereafter could not follow his friend to the Cross, but instead hid himself in a cave while Christ hung and suffered.

Christ took upon himself all human darkness—all the darkness we would ever know. And when he was replete with humanity's darkness, all Heaven retreated from him also. The Heavenly Hierarchies veiled themselves, so that in that darkness and desolation Christ Jesus could feel utter loneliness. And who at that moment became a light to him, a light to comfort him? What love could then at that lowest of all low moments ray into his being?

The love which held steady, never for an instant deserting him, which attended him under the Cross, was most especially the love of his pure Mother. This was the light that pierced his soul when the Heavens had grown dark. And then he knew to the fullest the power of human love. He took the substance of it into his Being, and the human love co-mingled with his Divine Love, even while he suffered on the Cross.¹

And he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and there began the solar eclipse wherein Christ had to face all the evil that would ever *eclipse* humanity, or threaten to eclipse human love. At that moment all who were near the Cross witnessed Christ Jesus become utterly powerless. He appeared as a suffering, powerless man. Nothing about him appeared

¹ It is also true that John and Mary Magdalene loved him through his agony. Their love was also the love he took into his Being while he hung on the Cross.

godly! The passersby mocked and scorned him, saying, “Look at how powerless your Messiah has become!” And Christ allowed this. As the eclipse came to an end—this spiritual eclipse wherein the darkness took center stage in view of all who beheld it—Jesus cried out, “It is fulfilled!” and gave up his spirit. And Mary never doubted.

He was lovingly laid to rest in the tomb, and the Earth quaked and the veil in the Temple was rent in two. The body of Christ Jesus went into the Earth, and the Holy of Holies was revealed in the Temple. The veil covering the Holy of Holies was torn in two when Christ died. This was a foreshadowing of the time when the Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant, would be revealed in his True Light in the coming days to those who could behold him.

All the disciples felt the overshadowing of their hearts by the darkness they had witnessed in the suffering of their Lord, and they mourned deeply, and grieved. They felt that the Sun forces of their own hearts had been eclipsed. Then they came together as a community, and it was Peter who strengthened them, even while he was in the darkness of the shame of denial. He was the lowest of the low, the most ashamed. But in the depths of that shame, on Holy Saturday, a glimmer of light touched his heart, and the memory of the Transfiguration broke through his darkness. He did not know that the Resurrection was about to take place, but he did remember what he had seen on Mt. Tabor, and spoke of this great Light ever so humbly to all who were gathered round.

And as we know, Christ was resurrected early Sunday morning, with Mary Magdalene as the first witness of his Glory. As witness of the Resurrection, Mary Magdalene was reborn. In that moment the darkness fell away from her soul and she forgot it—which is to say she *forgave* that darkness. In the presence of such Love, she reached a state wherein she could forgive all who had harmed her, who had led her astray. She forgave all this, to the point of forgetting it in Christ’s Presence—so that all she knew throughout her entire being was pure Love. While under the Cross she understood that her Lord had suffered on account of her own misdeeds; but in the Light of his Resurrection all was forgiven, and she was able to truly love herself—which is to say, she could feel the love one’s own angel feels for its human charge. And there is nothing of ego in such love.



Touch Me Not
James Tissot

The effects upon the soul of beholding the eclipse are a vast mystery; they are lasting and individual, but also communal. It is as if the soul is being taken through a cosmic birth canal in preparation for a rebirth. That rebirth is a mystery, and there is no limit to the time that may be required for that birthing to be complete. Every soul is seeking Divine Union. We go astray because we ache for it, for not knowing how to gain the Divine Love we seek to know, we follow many paths and err along the way.

An eclipse reveals the union of dark and light—the wholeness and beauty of dark meeting light. It reveals also the sacred marriage of the Sun and the Moon, the Lamb and His Bride, the spirit and the soul—that same union which is happening gradually within the ground of our own being. The Resurrection is the full union of spirit and soul, at that time when the soul shall have become so purified that the spirit can shine through it.

There are so many more mysteries that could be spoken of regarding all the Beings who came to witness this great event and its effects in the Cosmos and in the Earth. What has been spoken here is not the full picture; neither is it the only picture. It is merely what can be spoken now.

Let yourselves be reborn. Your soul is transfigured in the night, that you may become a light unto the world. Do not hide your light, but let it ray out to the world as mercy for all humanity. Blessed are those who let their light shine, for they shall become vessels of God's mercy. When your deeds, your words, and your thoughts become truly merciful, then will your light shine. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy; and it is by the power of mercy that the Resurrection shall come to pass.

From Christ's powerlessness, which he revealed on the Cross, there flowed mercy in streams of light, for he had become full of Mercy in his suffering. And the fullness of his Mercy became his resurrection body, which is a body of love. In his resurrection body is the promise that we too shall be resurrected; and the first step is that we become filled with mercy. Venus appeared close by the eclipse as a reminder of Divine Mercy. For in its highest aspect, the quality of Venus is mercy.

I leave these things with you now as a blessing for your lives, and do so with humble gratitude. Let us visit in the night.

So be it. Amen.



The Interview Between Jesus and Nicodemus
James Tissot

An Eclipse for Freedom

Kim Marie



While the Annual Conference of the Sophia Foundation was always intended to be an opportunity for the various Sophia communities to come together in one place for shared learning, connecting, and spiritual practice, having had the conference in California each year didn't seem to be achieving this intention as well as the Sophia Foundation would have liked. This year, the conference was changed to the Annual Sophia Retreat, with the intention of hosting this retreat in a new place in North America each year. Additionally, we wanted to create more of a "pilgrimage" feel to appeal to those for whom participation in our semi-annual pilgrimages to other

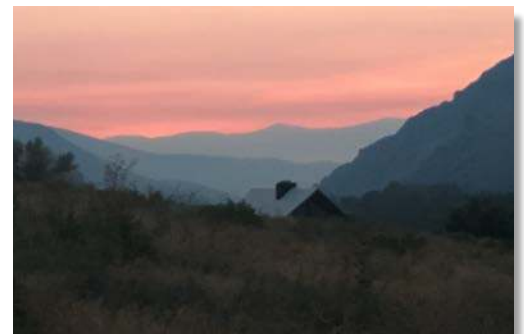
countries is a challenge, even while of great interest. This year's Annual Sophia Retreat was held in Challis, Idaho in correlation with the total solar eclipse that occurred on Monday, August 21st.

The idea of a Sophia Retreat was well received by our community, and we had one of our most successful annual events ever! I feel very grateful to have been a part of it, and feel inspired to share my personal experience of the event.

The retreat was led by Karen Rivers and Estelle Isaacson. Throughout the course of the event, the preparation for the eclipse included practicing the Sacred Dance of prayer eurythmy, as well as singing, drama, conversation, Grail celebrations, and study. Karen and Estelle, as well as Julie Humphreys from an Astrosophical perspective, painted many different pictures of the eclipse and its meaning, each one different from the next, for us to hold in our consciousness as the eclipse was approaching. I appreciated how this preparation allowed us to have many ideas to consider, while not getting attached to any specific expectation of what our experience would be on Monday.

Prior to the trip to Idaho, I began to feel inwardly that this trip was going to be significant for me, and that Freedom was likely a theme. The night before the eclipse, I was given the gift of reliving a special event that has been in my memory for thirty years as a significant experience of Freedom in my life, though my memory is accompanied by a few regrets.

Exactly thirty years ago this past summer, when I was sixteen years old, I traveled to Challis, Idaho with my family. My aunt lived there at the time with her third husband Jerry. Jerry worked as a cowboy, and while I remember very little about that trip to Challis, I do remember conversations with Jerry and learning some special leather braiding techniques he taught me. I've always loved horses, and associated them with Freedom,



in that I always felt free when I was with them. I told Jerry about my love of horses, and that while I'd never had horses, I'd been fortunate enough to learn to ride at a girlfriend's house when I had visited her several times.

One day while I was there in Challis, Jerry called me out and handed me the reins to a horse, and he said, "Here you go. Take her for a ride." I hopped on, and headed by myself up the trail and into the hills. Never in my life had I experienced such exhilaration or such Freedom, particularly when I was able to canter or "lope," as I learned it is called by the cowboys. Since that time thirty years ago, I'd only ridden on guided trail rides with my children, and had always longed to experience the Freedom with a horse that I'd felt when I was sixteen.

As I finished with the preparations for this year's Annual Sophia Retreat with Lisa, the director of the retreat center, she said to me, "You've probably never been to Challis before, have you?" I told her that actually one of my fondest memories was of Challis, and before I knew it, I found myself asking, "I don't suppose you know anyone who has a horse who might let me take it for a ride into the mountains?" Her reply was, "We have a ranch here about ten minutes away. Let me ask Jerry." What?! I could not get over the synchronicity! Thirty years later ... the same remote town, a horse ride, and the person who could make it happen had the same name as the person who first made it happen for me!

Jerry and Lisa connected me with Joe and Carrie, two beautiful, angelic human beings who very generously shared their horse Black Velvet with me and allowed me to take her into the hills of Challis. I mentioned that my sixteen-year-old memory, while filled with an awesome sense of Freedom, was also accompanied by some regret. You see, I went on that ride thirty years ago, and felt that Freedom, but within about ten minutes, my mind started to take over. I began considering all of the "what ifs." What if I get lost? What if the horse bucks me off? What if we meet a rattle snake? What if ... what if...what if? So many doubts and fears came up. My teenaged being succumbed to them, and I turned around and returned to the ranch within less than forty-five minutes. Jerry said to me, "I thought you'd be out there for a couple of hours at least." I felt like such a failure, and I always wished I could have had the full experience I was gifted with.



This time, while I wasn't completely alone as I had been the first time, Joe and Carrie gave me a beautiful experience of Freedom and trust. They followed my lead, allowing me to do whatever I was comfortable with, and I was determined to sink into the gift of the moment, trusting myself, trusting the horse, and trusting Christ and Sophia and the purity of the Love and Wisdom they've given me over these thirty years to move beyond my fears and self-doubt. My ride was beautiful, as I traveled through rolling hills, past coyote dens, rounding up cattle, and as Black Velvet loped through the fields with me on her back, experiencing the joy of a sixteen-year-old with the awareness and centeredness of the woman I've become.

I came to more fully understand my experience with the horse, and what it meant to me and my work in the world, as we went to the base of Mt. Borah Monday morning to view the eclipse. We prayed together, offering the Prayer Sequence and Morning Meditations to Christ and Sophia in Sacred Dance. Between prayers, we would pause, put on our glasses, and check in on the progression of the eclipse. As the light gradually changed approaching the full eclipse, the shadows on the ground seemed especially crisp. I thought about the importance of embracing our shadows and those of others, and how beautiful each shadow is as a part of each of us. As I looked at the group of participants, I was in awe of everyone's beauty, and felt an overwhelming sense of love and honoring toward each person there.

I was also amazed at how even the tiniest sliver of the sun that remained visible generated so much light upon the Earth, just as the tiniest spark of the Christ within each of us shines in the depths of our Soul, supporting us to connect with Spirit, never to be overcome by shadows or darkness if we're willing to connect to it. Just before the fullness of the eclipse, we completed the prayers with the words, "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness overcomes it not." Then we all took a seat on the ground, donned our glasses, and gazed in awe as we witnessed over two minutes of total solar eclipse.



Even as I write about this experience weeks later, it takes my breath away. In that moment as the Moon and Sun completely embraced, I felt a powerful experience of Sacred Union. I had the distinct feeling that "He has Her back," as I witnessed the Sun shining His rays of Spiritual Light like a crown of starlight around the Moon and Her Soulful form. As the Moon began to move away from the Sun, a bright, diamond-like cross of light shone at the edge of the ring of light. Rebirth! This was the feeling I felt deep inside of me, and it was very much like that feeling of Freedom I felt running across the Earth on horseback. This moment was a union of Sacred Feminine and Sacred Masculine, a union of Spirit and Soul. This union offers us all the potential for rebirth, and it's time for us to step into that potential as Human Beings.

My work as a Spiritual Life Coach this past year has been telling me that I am a "midwife of rebirth," and that my purpose is to support others in experiencing a limitlessness in Freedom. I didn't fully understand that mission until the eclipse moment. Nor did I fully understand the true meaning of the Freedom I felt riding Black Velvet until that moment.

Over the years, in researching the virtue of Leo (my birth constellation and the constellation in which the eclipse occurred), I came to a powerful cognitive understanding of what Freedom is. In looking to the dictionary for a definition of Freedom, I resonated with Freedom as the "absence of necessity, coercion or constraint in choice or action," and as a "quality or state of being released." In my life up to that point, I'd only experienced brief moments of feeling no constraint, and perhaps had never felt a state of being fully released. I spent years feeling

constrained by my own self-imposed beliefs about what was “necessary,” or what I thought others wanted of me. I was constrained by my fears and self-doubts, and I naively allowed myself to be coerced into believing things that kept me small and enslaved.

In doing deeper research, I also learned that the etymology of the word *Freedom* gives it a beautiful meaning. The second part of the word, “-dom,” means “judgment, statute or law.” The first part of the word, “free,” comes from the Old English *freogan* (v), which means “to love, think of lovingly, to honor,” and the Old English *freo* (adj), which means “noble, worthy of honor and respect.” Thus, the origin of the word *Freedom* is “The Law of Love.”

The Sacred Union I witnessed at the total solar eclipse was the ultimate expression of Freedom. I realized in that moment that it is not until we can completely integrate our shadow nature into our light nature, and fully embrace it unconditionally, that we can truly experience Freedom. Until we’re able to bring together in Sacred Union the above and the below, Spirit and Soul, Light and Dark, Divine Masculine and Divine Feminine, we will never be able to experience true Freedom and live by the Law of Love.

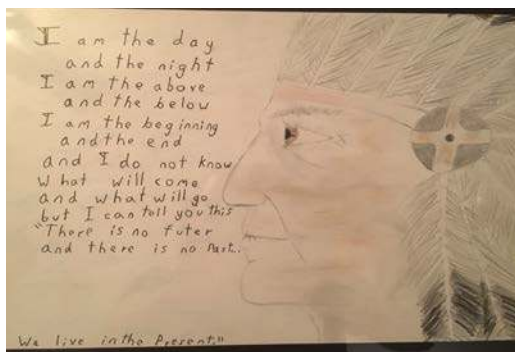
Pythagoras said, “No one is free who has not obtained the empire of himself.” The Empire of the Self includes all aspects of the Self. It does not pick and choose what is comfortable or convenient. To obtain this Empire of the Self, to obtain Freedom, we must learn to love ourselves with deep compassion and self-affirmation, and from there, in Freedom, we can equally love our brothers and sisters according to the Law of Love, with compassion and affirmation for who they are as well. I believe it is no mistake that the eclipse occurred in the constellation of Leo, whose message is *compassion becomes Freedom*.

Upon returning from Idaho one week later, I celebrated my forty-seventh birthday. As a single mother, birthdays in the past have often felt non-eventful, and even lonely at times. I’ve learned to gratefully celebrate my life and those who’ve so generously loved and supported me over the years. This year, my birthday felt like the most magical day of my life; a rebirth indeed. I’m finally experiencing the full “release” and true Freedom that comes from no longer imposing self-limiting doubts and beliefs on myself. I believe in the work I’m doing, and my ability to share it in the world. I believe in my worthiness, and I believe I’m fully deserving of love. These beliefs were reflected back to me on my birthday.



What made my day so special was my sons. This year I asked them to go for a hike with me, and we spent the day in the mountains with Mother Nature, enjoying the magic of the streams, a beautiful mountain lake, and the many treasures we encountered along our seven-mile journey. That experience would have been a perfect gift in itself, but after we returned home, the boys each gave me gifts they had worked hard and lovingly to create. First I opened a gift

from my younger son, who is eleven. He had drawn for me a gorgeous picture of a Native American Indian Chief, and written a verse on the page that said:



*I am the day and the night.
I am the above and the below.
I am the beginning and the end.
And I do not know what will come and what will go.
But I can tell you this,
There is no future and there is no past...
We live in the present.*

I felt as though I had received a message from the Great Creator Spirit! Then, as if the picture and the verse weren't already such perfect symbols of my eclipse experience of the Eternal Presence of the Sun, my older son presented me with a stunning dark wood carving of the Great Mother holding a candle out as if to say, "Never forget your light." It was a perfect reminder and symbol of my Soul striving and remembering.

Between my experience of the eclipse, the symbols I received upon returning home, and a dream I had earlier in the year (a story for another time), I feel deeply grateful for life, and the ways in which the Sacred Feminine and Sacred Masculine weave within it, guiding us to the fullness of who we came here to be. This year has been a deep validation for me and my work as a Midwife of Rebirth, and I feel more committed than ever to finding ways to support people on the Spiritual journey of rebirthing.



We've seen massive devastation and pain on the Earth so soon after the eclipse. Our Mother is trying to remind us to pay attention to and remember who we are, to connect to what matters most in our lives, and to re-envision a new Heaven and a new Earth, so that we can rebirth ourselves out of the Sacred Union of Love and Wisdom, and meet our destiny. May you be blessed with the experience of true Freedom, embracing the fullness of who you are with the knowing that you are worthy of all the Love and Wisdom life has to offer.



Kim Marie is the administrator of the Sophia Foundation, and came to Anthroposophy in her thirty-third year. She brings practicality to spirituality as a Spiritual Life Coach committed to midwifing her clients through the transformative and often challenging process of rebirthing themselves into their full potential. Her programs and courses, including "Mother's Medicine," support a return to the wisdom of the Divine Feminine, and nurture the soul's journey of remembering, reconnecting, re-envisioning and rebirthing for the sake of a new future. She offers regular writing and inspiration through her blog at KimMarieCoaching.com.

Transitions and New Life in the Sophia Foundation

Kim Marie

This past August, on the coattails of a wonderful Annual Sophia Retreat in Challis, Idaho, the Sophia Foundation Board met for their annual summer meeting. The agenda was full, and I feel that it was one of the most fruitful and valuable board meetings I've experienced in my three years as the administrator of the Sophia Foundation.

What I feel most enthusiastic about sharing is the creativity and new visions that came out of the meeting. These included ideas for new programs and new ways of expanding our outreach and spreading the awareness of Divine Sophia, plans for our 2018 Annual Sophia Retreat, enhancements for Star Wisdom research and awareness potential, as well as ways we can more effectively support our community members. While many of these ideas are in their seed stage, I wish to share them with you in hopes that you will hold the intention with us to nurture and tend these seeds to fruition.

Astrofire Software

Many of our community members are longtime owners of Astrofire, an Astrosophy software created by the late Peter Treadgold for Star Wisdom research and astrological applications. This program was created to operate on Windows XP in 32-bit technology. As many of you know, this is very outdated technology, and Microsoft does not even support Windows XP any longer. While many have had success installing Astrofire on Windows 7 and even Windows 10, the results are inconsistent, challenging and unpredictable. During the board meeting, we were made aware of a friend who has been working on ways to update the Astrofire software, and integrate it with our Sinewave/Astrogeo software created for Astrogeographia by our Australian friend, mathematician and Waldorf science teacher, David Bowden. As well as achieving this integration, the goal is to create an Astrosophy program that will run efficiently on modern technology platforms. This is wonderful news indeed, and we are hopeful that we will be able to bring forth a new version of the software within the next year or two. Despite the outdated nature of the current software, we continue to receive multiple orders for it each year due to the unique and powerful nature of the program and its capabilities as a foundation for the new wisdom of the stars, Astrosophy—a star wisdom that honors Sophia as the Queen of Heaven. Please be sure to stay tuned for updates on this project.

Robert Powell and His Research

As many of you know, as of 2017 our dear co-founder Robert Powell is no longer leading workshops in North America. Already in 2016 he began to cut back on his workshop activity.² Robert has been guided to focus more of his time on Astrosophical research and sacred movement as a path to Sophia and Christ, as well as on publishing more books to share details of his research with our community. To that end, he has taken steps in his life to step away from

² Robert has given some background to this transition in previous issues of *Starlight*: “Choreocosmos Considerations” (Easter/Pentecost 2016), “Advent/Holy Nights 2016/2017 Letter” (Epiphany 2017), and “Grail Knights Training and Sophia Grail Circle Training Update” (Easter/Pentecost 2017).

certain areas that he feels it is time to pass along to others, including moving to an advisory role for the Sophia Foundation Board of Trustees, traveling less, leading fewer programs, and moving with his wife Lacquanna Paul to a new home in Ecuador. He and Lacquanna plan to be in South America for nine months of the year and in Europe for three months of the year, during which time he will be giving workshops there, including the yearly international Choreocosmos gathering in Roncesano, Italy. In the nurturing equatorial location of his new home, Robert is able to immerse himself in much needed peace and quiet to focus on his research and writing projects. The current projects Robert is working on are very exciting. They include:

1) A Steiner Books edition of the *Prayer Sequence and the Foundation Stone Meditation*, including updates to both.

2) *The Shambhala Trilogy*—books with new research and practices to bring us closer to Christ and Sophia:

- (a) *Grail Breathing: From the Foundation Stone of Love to the Tree of Life*
- (b) *The Shambhala Path: The Tree of Life and the Divine Alphabet*
- (c) *The Seven Healing Sounds: As Above, So Below. Balancing One's Inner Organs—One's Inner Planetary System—To Harmonize With The Solar System Above*

3) *The Reality of the Grail*: This is a research project that Robert believes will place the whole of anthroposophy in a new light, in particular with respect to the Goetheanum as the new Grail castle for this time of the second coming of Christ, as it is located next to the Arlesheim hermitage that was central to the Grail events in the life of Parzival in the ninth century, and also because it stands in relation both spiritually and energetically to Golgotha and the Christ events in Palestine at the beginning of the Christian era.

4) *The Karma Research Project*: This project is central to Robert's life work. It started through a spiritual encounter with Rudolf Steiner, which led to the meeting with anthroposophy—in particular with the Karma lectures—in February 1972. He has been working on this project on and off since 1972, and feels it is now time to bring the research findings out (in an appropriate way) so that they do not become lost.

5) *The Christian Teaching of Reincarnation*: This project is an offshoot of the Karma Research Project. It is a matter now, at this time of Christ's second coming, of introducing reincarnation to Christians against the background of the history of Christianity, above all focusing upon the moral dimension of Christianity and how this moral dimension is deepened if one takes reincarnation into consideration.

6) *Choreocosmos*: This project is to write a book about Choreocosmos and the spiritual path implicit in cosmic and sacred dance, which has arisen as a spiritual path in our time under the aegis of the Sophia Foundation.

7) *The Sophia Grail Circle and the Grail Celebrations*: This project is intended to give an overview of the central impulse and activity of the Sophia Foundation.

8) *The Pilgrimages of the Sophia Foundation to Sacred Place: The Pilgrimages to the Earth Chakras*: This project is intended to offer an overview of the various pilgrimages, and in particular the current focus on pilgrimages to the various Earth Chakras, in connection with our spiritual practices to assist at sacred sites in the awakening of the Earth Mother at this time of Christ's second coming and his descent to Shambhala.

9) *Stargazing as a Spiritual Path*: This project will document Robert's discoveries over many years of star portals to higher spiritual reality in connection with the life of Christ.

As you can see from this list, while Robert may not be traveling as much, he is not slowing down in the least! The Board was thrilled to receive this list of projects from Robert, and are enthusiastic about supporting him to bring them to fruition.

Board Members

As Robert and his wife Lacquanna (Lucky) stepped back from the Sophia Foundation Board to roles as advisory Board members, we received a few new Board members whom I wish to introduce to you. Steven Lambeth and Lila Tschappat joined the Board in 2015 and continue to be fresh voices of wisdom and inspiration for the Sophia Foundation. We are thrilled to have Audrey Wiebe join the Board this year (2017). Audrey is a trained Eurythmist and Choreocosmos graduate who brings a wealth of wisdom, insight, and teaching to the Sophia Foundation. These new members join longtime Board members Karen Rivers (Board President), Russell Delman, Philip Mees, and Michael Choy (Treasurer). You can learn more about our Board members on our website: <https://sophiafoundation.org/board/>. The Sophia Foundation Board of Trustees is very interested in hearing from our community with your ideas, questions or concerns. Please don't hesitate to reach out and connect!

Valentin Tomberg Archives

As many of you have known and appreciated for many years, the writings of Valentin Tomberg are a treasure to our community and to humanity. Recognizing this truth, and knowing of the existence of an extensive amount of Tomberg's material that Robert Powell was given by Eva Cliteur, who was a close friend of Valentin Tomberg, the Sophia Foundation felt that it was very important to archive this material and preserve it for future generations. We are pleased to share that this project is well underway. It is comforting to know that the writings of this great teacher will be cared for and preserved.

Programs

Even though Robert Powell is not teaching in North America, our North American programs continue to flourish through this time of transition. Some programs are in a reconfiguration status, while others, such as the pilgrimages to sacred sites (to Bali in 2018), the North Carolina Choreocosmos program, the Boulder Choreocosmos program, the Sophia Grail Circle Facilitators program, the Grail Knights program, and the annual Sophia retreat, are continuing to flourish, enriched with new-found inspiration and delivery. We cherish the hope that more people will initiate Sophia Foundation programs in their communities to further spread the Love and Wisdom of Christ and Sophia.

Visioning

A year ago, Robert Powell shared with the Board that while we as an organization have an amazing vertical dimension focusing on the spiritual aspects of the Sophia impulse—and that we must continue to maintain this—in addition what is needed now is an expansion of the horizontal dimension: reaching out for the tending of the Soul. Doing this requires a new approach. The Board of Trustees spent a significant portion of the board meeting visioning, brainstorming, and planning for the future of the Sophia Foundation. In this visioning, the Board has decided to focus on six primary areas of work:

- Ways of attracting young people
- Instituting socially conscious service projects
- Expanding offerings to be available remotely
- Programs for new people
- Programs for experienced people
- Programs for priests (long term/experienced/advanced people) and those called to serve in a Sophianic way.

Additional goals in alignment with these areas of work for 2018 include:

- A surplus in the budget for 2018 with plenty of operating cash on hand
- More online offerings from more teachers
- More dynamic and consistent social media presence.

There were many ideas considered around what types of new programs we may offer, including sacred speech and communication, sacred relationship with oneself and others, and sacred activism. There was a clear interest in hearing more from our community as to what everyone is seeking and longing for. How can we support you in your soul and spiritual work? Please feel free to share your suggestions and interests with us at sophia@sophiafoundation.org.

We also realized that in order to bring more of our work into the horizontal, earthly dimension, it would be good to have more programs that address the whole human being. To this end, the idea was seeded of having *Sophia's Hands*, *Sophia's Wisdom* and *Sophia's Heart* as umbrellas for our work in the world. It is envisaged that *Sophia's Hands* would be an initiative to implement and encourage sacred activism in the world, supporting causes aligned with the mission of Sophia. Moreover, *Sophia's Wisdom* would facilitate new programs and learning opportunities to bring forth deeper wisdom teachings in alignment with the Divine Feminine impulse and the Rose of the World, including the teachings of Robert Powell and Karen Rivers, as well as other teachers. Lastly, *Sophia's Heart* would be a vessel for greater community connection, opening more possibilities for people to network, share, and support each other.

Additional ideas presented included things like nature-based Sophia Grail Quests, events focused upon parenting and family support/connection, and programs to connect more with the Sacred Masculine in addition to the Sacred Feminine. For some time, Robert has had a vision of a great many people—he mentioned one thousand—come together to do Choreocosmos. The Board has begun exploring ways to expand our Choreocosmos program to help make this dream become a

reality. We are also working toward creating a subscription program for regular monthly online learning and community connection opportunities so that our community can have ongoing support to deepen the teachings and practices offered through the Sophia Foundation.

Most exciting is our plan for the 2018 Annual Sophia Retreat. We are currently working on a program in connection with Indigenous Wisdom Leaders. Further details will be made known as we come nearer to finalizing this plan.

Financial Planning

With the many transitions that have happened recently within the Sophia Foundation, including —as mentioned above—the fact that Robert is no longer teaching in North America, 2017 has been a challenging year for us financially. While some programs are budding and growing, others have fallen away. In support of dealing with these changes, the Board spent a significant amount of time considering ways we can help fill the financial gaps and thus ensure a strong financial year in 2018.

The Sophia Foundation relies heavily on its community for support through donations and program participation. The Board of Trustees wishes to continue to generously support the research of Robert Powell, in addition to focusing upon bringing the Sophia work into the world in new ways. We are hopeful that the many new ideas and initiatives the Sophia Foundation is working on will inspire you to generously contribute to our Annual Giving Campaign this year, and that, in addition, you will be inspired to become more involved in our programs, events and learning opportunities as we share them with you in the coming months. It is precisely through Sophianic community that an impulse for peace in the world is cultivated, an impulse that seeks to unite heaven and earth even as Christ and Sophia, the Lamb and his Bride, are united.

Our hope is that through more offerings in the next year and beyond, we will generate increased opportunities for outreach to increase our donor base. Here I would like to express profound gratitude to all those who have generously donated to support our work. Our new website and online shop have already been significant in helping our specialty products and study materials become more accessible and easily purchased. We intend to add more options to our shop in the coming months.

I felt inspired to write this article and share something about the wonderful work of the Sophia Foundation. This Board of Trustees is one of the most mature, loving and effective groups I have ever witnessed working together. As Audrey Wiebe put it upon accepting her nomination to join the Board, “How could I *not* work with this amazing constellation of individuals?” As the administrator of the Sophia Foundation, and with my own personal passion to bring forth more awareness of the Sacred Feminine, I feel truly blessed to work with this remarkable community, a community I look forward to serving ever more in the coming period of time.

Historical Grail Stream and the Grail at the Present Time

Robert Powell

(Revised and edited by James R. Wetmore)

Let us look back to the historical Grail stream, which first surfaced in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries in Europe, and was founded through a high Initiate named Titurel, who carried the Grail impulse at that time. To understand this founding on a deeper level, we must trace the lineage of this high Initiate in his different incarnations, and in so doing we come to the one called Melchizedek, who brought bread and wine to Abraham some four thousand years ago. Melchizedek introduced the *agape* communion (with bread and wine) in preparation for what Christ would later bring as the Eucharist.



Melchizedek Blessing Abraham
Walter Rane



God Appears to Noah
James Tissot

If we go back further from Melchizedek, we come to the time of Noah, the great Initiate who led his people out of Atlantis at the time of the Deluge. In Hindu tradition he is called the Manu.¹ “Manu” is not a personal name, but a title, like “Buddha.” The current Manu (Noah–Melchizedek–Titurel) has the task of overseeing the development of the seven post-Atlantean cultural epochs—that is, the Ancient Indian, Ancient Persian, Egyptian-Babylonian, and Greco-Roman cultures, as well as our present culture, often referred to as the European cultural epoch. The future epochs this Manu will oversee are the Slavic in the age of Aquarius, and the American in the age of Capricorn.

Titurel brought the Grail impulse as a metamorphosis of what he had already initiated in earlier times. Looking back to the work of the Manu as Teacher of the Seven Holy Rishis—the founders of the Ancient Indian culture—we see that the essence of what the Manu transmitted to them (as also to his later disciples) was a work intended to prepare people for the incarnation of the Logos—for the Coming of Christ.

The Manu’s teaching from that time is summarized in the *Vedas*. The term “Veda” means “Word.” The Veda is the Holy Word—that is, in our modern language, the Holy Gospel. The Vedas embody what the Manu was able to bring through the Seven Holy Rishis at the founding of the Ancient Indian culture. The Rishis were priests in service of the Word, and this Ancient Indian tradition still lives on in its spiritual disciplines. Vedic priests, or Brahmins, have the task of studying the *Vedas*, reciting them, and performing priestly service. We may say, then, that the Grail stream grows out of this ancient Vedic stream, which reaches all the way back to Ancient

¹ The next Manu, the successor to the “Noah” Manu, will be the Mani–Parsifal individuality—the first human Manu—named Sâvarna in the Hindu tradition.

India, forming the deep undercurrent of esoteric tradition that flows through all the cultural epochs. It is a stream leading also into the future, preparing us for the imminent descent of Sophia, Divine Wisdom.

Sophia and the New Grail Mysteries

In considering Christianity, the past event upon which we focus our attention is of course the Mystery of Golgotha, the Turning Point of Time. But as to the future, we look to the New Mysteries of the Holy Grail. We look back still to the Mystery of Golgotha as the most significant event in the history of the Earth, but we look now also to the future in preparation for the Coming of Sophia, who in the Book of Revelation is called the Bride of the Lamb.

Sophia's true mission will unfold in the far-distant future, but something of this mission—perhaps we may say a fragrance thereof—has been coming gradually to expression since the latter part of the Eighteenth Century. Sophia more and more inspires us, and our work draws upon this inspiration. It is important to emphasize that in preparing for the increasing presence of Sophia, we are in no way undermining any existing tradition, but in all ways continue to respect the utmost importance of the time-honored tradition of Christianity. This point must be made, for in some circles it is believed that we can simply dispense with Christian tradition and move on to something new. However, this approach is *not at all* what lives in Sophia, who honors everything from the past and seeks to renew it, to raise it to a new level of experience, a new dimension of existence.

The Church of John

The book *Meditations on the Tarot* offers a key for entering the path of the Sophia Mysteries. This book is an expression of the great Johannine tradition, which traces its origin back to the beloved disciple John. As the book's author puts it in the First Letter, "The Magician," John is in service to Peter, the rock upon which the Church was founded, and who was consecrated to this office by the Risen Christ. Although not recorded anywhere in the Gospels, it is a fact of humankind's spiritual history that in an act of great humility, Peter was consecrated by the Risen Christ as Head, or First Bishop, of the Church. This act established the tradition of the Apostolic Succession—and we may say that alongside its Johannine aspect, another key theme of *Meditations on the Tarot* is an exploration of the *inner mission* of the Apostolic tradition.

The task of Peter is clearly expressed in the final chapter of the Gospel of St. John, where he is thrice asked by Christ, "Lovest thou me?" Each time Peter answers "Yes," to which Christ responds, "Feed my sheep." This interchange expresses the mission of the *exoteric* Church, which has the task, as an expression of the will of Christ, of administering the sacraments unto the End of Time. And for countless people, the sacraments *are* their connection with Christ. It may be that at present some are unable to assimilate the esoteric dimension of Christianity, or relate personally to the depth we are trying to address here. But they are not for this reason in any fundamental way lacking! They have the eternal blessing of devotional resonance with the central sacrament of the Mass! We honor this, for the Mass offers sustenance to human souls through the substances taken in Communion with Christ, and as it has just been said, we know from the conversation between Peter and the Risen Christ that administering the sacraments is a central task of the Apostolic Church.



*The Disciples Peter and John
Running to the Sepulchre on the
Morning of the Resurrection*
Eugène Burnand

The task of John, however, is different. Pointing to John, who was walking along the shore behind Peter at the time of his conversation with the Risen One, Peter asks, “What is to become of him?” to which the Risen One replies, “What is it to you if he waits until I come again?” Implicit in these words is John’s task to hold true to the element of depth—that is, to the *esoteric* teachings of the Church—until the time of the Second Coming. This is the task given to John, who is to bring these teachings into the world, and in due course—at the time of the Second Coming—into the exoteric Church as well as an impulse of renewal. *And that time is now!* This is exactly what

we find in the book *Meditations on the Tarot*, for it seeks to renew the element of depth, the esoteric mysteries, in the Church of Peter.

In the Sophia Grail Circle, we hold a Sophia Communion with the substances which are sacred to Sophia. This does not mean we are in any way superior to the traditions of Christianity! We are simply responding to the call of Sophia to *prepare* for the coming age of the Rose of the World, which is to *unfold* in the Age of Aquarius. We honor what comes from the past while *also* incorporating the impulse of Sophia into these time-honored traditions. Peter and John *work together* as the two disciples charged with guarding the Outer and Inner Mysteries of Christianity. The Church—in essence single and undivided—unites past with future.

Let us now consider the esoteric teaching of reincarnation. Any intimation of reincarnation would generally speaking have been incomprehensible to the disciples during the time of Christ. Very few among Christ’s disciples would have been able to understand, had Jesus said to them, for example, “You are the reincarnation of so and so....” Such knowledge was deliberately withheld from human beings at that time, for it was necessary that all souls undergo at least one incarnation with no knowledge of previous lives; only in this way could they fully experience personal freedom. And there are other mysteries Christ was unable to reveal at that time. He could not say to his disciples, for instance, when he spoke the words “I am the True Vine,” that this was a mantram for awakening the root chakra! They would not have understood him. But the time is now come when John is to open up the esoteric mysteries of Christ. As an example of what is meant by bringing the element of depth into the exoteric Church, we find in the Ninth Letter of *Meditations on the Tarot* the seven I AM sayings of Christ set in relation to the seven chakras.

Taking up Christian esoteric practices such as working with the seven I AM sayings of Christ in relation to the seven chakras is an important step on the esoteric path of development leading to the great esoteric *School of Christ*. To enter more fully into the School of Christ is however a matter also of developing *moral qualities*. This esoteric path is not so much a matter of acquiring esoteric wisdom, but of shifting focus to moral deepening. Yes, through Christian esoteric practices we may make strides in knowledge, but ultimately the way we come into closer connection with Christ is through our striving to become better human beings morally. This is the essence of what is expressed in the profound book titled *Meditations on the Tarot*.

Through entering the School of Christ we may eventually come to a point where Christ begins to bestow certain blessings and graces upon us. We may be shown certain things. Our hearts may be touched by the Risen One, whence flows unimaginable blessing. Such is the heart of the book *Meditations on the Tarot*. It is an elaboration of the Moral Schooling of the Greater Guardian of the Threshold, who is Christ. And so it is one of the fundamental books qualified to prepare us to receive something of the New Christ Mysteries. As an example let us take a reading from the First Letter of this profound work, regarding St. Anthony the Great, one of the Desert Fathers of Egypt:

Among Christian Hermeticists nobody assumes the title and function of “initiator or master.” For all are fellow pupils, and each is master of each in some respect—just as each is a pupil of each in some other respect. We cannot do better than follow the example of St. Anthony the Great, who subjected himself in all sincerity to the pious men whom he visited, making it his endeavor to learn for his own benefit just how each was superior to him in zeal and ascetic practice. He observed the graciousness of one, the earnestness at prayer in another; studied the even temper of one and the kindheartedness of another; fixed his attention on the vigils kept by one and by the study pursued by another; admired one for his patient endurance, another for his fasting and his sleeping on the ground; watched closely this man’s meekness and the forbearance shown by another; and in one and all alike he marked especially devotion to Christ and the love they had for one another. Having thus taken his fill, he would return to his own place of asceticism. Then he assimilated in himself what he had obtained from each and devoted all his energies to realizing in himself the virtues of all. (St. Athanasius, *The Life of St. Anthony*, chapter 4)

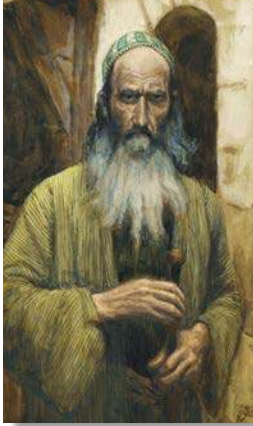
Let this be also the spirit of our work—to bring to realization the words of Christ, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in your midst.” That is how He can be present with us, and that is precisely the meaning of the above quote—to hold in consciousness the ideal of Christ as Teacher, Master, and Initiator, who in our time, working in close collaboration with Sophia toward the fulfillment of the evolution of humanity and the Earth, guides us in all we do.

The Three Christian Streams

Let us now consider the question of Paul and the Pauline tradition. To what source might we turn to learn more on this question? In relation to the newly-arising Sophia teachings in our time, we find such a source in the great Russian poet and philosopher Vladimir Solovyov,² in whose work *A Short Story of the Antichrist* (written in the last year of his life) we discover much that is helpful with regard to the foregoing question, for “Paul” is an important character in this work. In his short

² Solovyov was born in 1847 and died in 1900 at the early age of 53. His life was significantly changed by his three meetings with Divine Sophia. Through the fruits of his labors, issuing from these encounters with Sophia, he has come to be known as the founder of the stream of *Russian Sophiology*. This stream has the goal of incorporating Sophia into the tradition of Christianity. Several priests within the Russian Orthodox Church have also taken up this work, the Russian Orthodox priests Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov being among the best-known representatives of Russian Sophiology.

story, Solovyov describes a great vision of the coming of the Antichrist in our time. He speaks of Three Streams of Christianity: the Petrine, going back to Peter; the Johannine, stemming from John; and the Pauline, associated with Paul.



St. Paul
James Tissot

Paul, previously called Saul, was—as Saul—one of the most zealous persecutors of the early Christians. However, Saul then had a direct supersensible encounter with the Risen Christ before the Gates of Damascus and was converted, after which he undertook his missionary work on behalf of Christ. The Pauline stream of Christianity was founded out of the spirit of this encounter. Such direct illuminations are possible—as we see not only in Saul, who thereby became Paul, but in the case of many another enlightened mystic throughout history. The Protestant tradition can be seen in relation to this primal experience of Saul becoming Paul. Since its inception through Martin Luther in the year 1517, Protestantism has of course split into innumerable sects, but taken together they comprise what Solovyov viewed as the *Pauline stream*.

Moreover, Solovyov saw the Roman Catholic Stream as the *Petrine stream*, and the Eastern Orthodox Church as an *expression* of the *Johannine stream*. Regarding the latter, it would be more accurate to say that the Johannine stream encompasses the *pulse of the living Christ* as shepherded by the great being we call John, whose work shines through *Meditations on the Tarot*, the subtitle of which, tellingly, is *A Journey Into Christian Hermeticism*. This text is the foundational work of the great stream of esoteric Christianity known as *Christian Hermeticism*. Viewing them together, it can be said that the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church represent two branches of the original Apostolic Church. Or we might say, by way of analogy, that just as we have the two lobes of the lungs, so these two branches of Christian tradition form together the two lobes of the Apostolic Church—that is, the Original Church of Christ’s disciples, founded by them through the event of Pentecost, at which they were transformed from the status of disciples into that of apostles. But then, as we have seen, according to Solovyov, we have the third great stream of Christianity, the *Pauline stream*, founded upon the untiring missionary activity of he who had experienced *direct contact* with the Risen Christ. Paul’s case teaches us also that it is not necessary, in the quest for spiritual enlightenment, to turn to earthly spiritual teachers; rather his example encourages us to strive for, and to open ourselves to, *direct encounter* with Christ.

Against this background, we can see how these three streams of Christianity relate to three levels in the human being. The quality of Peter is *faith*, seated in the human *will*. The quality of John is *love*, living in the human *heart*. The quality of Paul is *hope*, which lives in the fullness of human thoughts, in the *head*. Paul was a very learned man, and it is clear that Protestantism came about through a powerful awakening in humanity’s thinking capacity from around the time of the Renaissance, commencing at the beginning of the age of the *consciousness soul*.³ The

³ The age during which the consciousness soul comes to birth—our present age—extends for 2160 years from 1414 to 3574. The consciousness soul is the third and highest aspect of the human soul, after the *sentient soul* (feeling life) and

Pauline stream really only begins to mature after the onset of the time of the consciousness soul. Thus, alongside the two branches, or lobes, of the Apostolic Church, a new stream of Christianity—of which Paul was a forerunner—began to develop in the age of the consciousness soul, signaled by the birth of Protestantism.

A Fourth Stream: Sophianic Christianity

And now, with the onset of Christ's Second Coming in the Twentieth Century, yet another stream of Christianity is emerging: the *Sophianic stream*.⁴ This newly-arising form of Christianity not only looks back to the Mystery of Golgotha, but seeks to connect with Sophia's increasing influence, leading humanity and the Earth into the future. From our time forward, Christ and Sophia, the Lamb and His Bride, are working together on behalf of the development of the Earth and humankind. Only in the Apocalypse of John do we find any intimation (through references to the Lamb and His Bride) of this new, Sophianic stream of Christianity. Thus John, as well as representing Johannine Christianity, plays a key role in the development of Sophianic Christianity. Moreover, it is evident that John has a deep connection to the modern Initiation into the Mysteries of the Holy Grail. John's work is to enliven the *whole stream* of Christianity. Even as at the Last Supper he listened to the beating of the Master's Heart, so does he continue listening to the Master's Heart throughout the unfolding of time. Through his attunement to Christ's Heart he is blessed to be able to inspire the Heart of the Church with the New Mysteries now arising. John stands steward over tremendous esoteric wisdom, which he administers in measured portions over the course of time as stimuli to the further development of Christianity. John's primary concern is the moral evolution of humankind. To the degree we develop morally, we come increasingly into the spiritual warmth streaming from Christ through John. And as we have just seen, John is guardian also of the new Sophia Mysteries arising in our time, which seek to elevate our head-thinking to heart-thinking. This instreaming of grace is not guaranteed. We must first open ourselves to the grace and blessing streaming in through Christ and Sophia.

As already noted, at the heart of the Pauline stream lives *hope*. Ultimately, hope directs us to the Resurrection, to the grace of hoping that one day we too shall find our resurrection. Of course, it is somewhat one-sided to so schematically characterize the Pauline stream, given that the *Letters of Paul* address the importance of all *three* theological virtues: *faith, hope, and love*. There is nothing surprising in this, for Paul was the one—at the very beginning of the spread of Christianity—who most clearly elaborated a *theology*. Nonetheless, as Paul was awakened before the Gates of Damascus by the Etheric Body of Christ, *hope* first dawned in the fullest sense that the mission of humanity—the interweaving of faith, hope, and love—might one day be accomplished.

mind soul (thought life). The development of the consciousness soul will lead to increasing awareness of the life of spirit. The 2160-year span of the age of the consciousness soul is related cosmologically to the unfolding of the Age of Pisces.

⁴ As indicated by Rudolf Steiner, "Through Holy Sophia, a beholding of Christ in spiritual form is beginning to arise in the Twentieth Century"—see Rudolf Steiner, *Isis-Mary-Sophia* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2002).

The Rose of the World

Our work in preparing for the Coming of Sophia as Bearer of the Rose of the World entails understanding the importance of *all* world religions, which latter we may liken to the Petals of the Rose of the World. Among the great religions (other than Christianity) are Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Taoism, and the indigenous or shamanic religions directed primarily to the Earth Mother. How do they relate to one another?

Sophia loves every human being, even as Christ does. The vision of the Rose of the World is that of humankind as one great family. We all of us share a common origin—the Divine. Viewing humanity as one great family, we see how each of the different world religions opens to us an aspect, a petal, of the flower that is Sophia. Her universal wisdom has been revealed through the founders of these religions, to each of whom was given a key fit especially to one facet thereof. Which key was given to each founder was a function of geographical location, particular human collectivity, and evolutionary moment in time—factors that come to expression in the *mode of consciousness* of the people for whom each religion has been destined.

One day, all these wisdom streams shall be woven into an all-embracing supersensible structure we may call *Sophia's Beehive*, for it will represent the portal through which the one Colony of Humankind migrates when *surpassing*—which means also *transfiguring*—the Earthly world. In Sophia's Beehive, a spiritual structure is gathered together from the pollen and nectar of the Rose of the World; all religions are united in higher synthesis. Our great task is to *differentiate* among the world religions and great spiritual streams, while at the same time holding in overview their *synthesis* as Universal Divine Wisdom. This latter overview represents nothing less than the Transcendent Unity of Religions—the “horizon,” so to say, of Sophia's vantage point.

Yes, this is Sophia's perspective, but it must also be said, from the complementary perspective of the path of humankind *toward* its goal, that all the world religions *leading up to* Christianity were, in the wake of the momentous event of Christ's incarnation in human form upon the Earth (the Turning Point of Time), given the *new mission* of becoming Christianized (or perhaps better said, Sophianized), of transforming their mysteries through the light of the Christ impulse and the gradual descent of Sophia. Thus may these religions as freshened tributaries further renew the impulse of Christianity in the evolution of humanity—signifying a *metamorphosis* of those religions, as of a stem or leaf into the wonder of the flower that hitherto showed no clear sign of itself. The Mystery of Golgotha changed all religions⁵ through the unique fact that a God-born being became human. Though an important matter for consideration, the fact that some religions (at least in their pre-Christian forms) do not reflect *every aspect* of the final goal of humankind's evolution (which is resurrection) may in the end be seen as a function of the time, place, and the human collectivity concerned, which is to say that it may be a question of certain keys opening certain doors on the eventual path to the Heart of the Rose of the World. The

⁵Including Islam, the third Abrahamic Religion, which however appeared *after* Christianity, at least insofar as it renewed the promise of Hagar and Ishmael.

pivotal point is that resurrection is the goal of evolution.⁶ Through many lives we work toward resurrection—that which Christ Jesus attained in a single incarnation—the Incarnation.

From the perspective of Sophia's universal wisdom, we see the world religions as petals of the Rose of the World, as partial aspects, or "relative absolutes," bestowed upon human communities. This breathtaking *panorama* we have called the Transcendent Unity of Religions. However, at the same time we must integrate into this vertical, static, simultaneous "Platonic" dimension, the more horizontal, dynamic, evolutionary, "Aristotelian" dimension of the *path* we must tread *toward* the goal of resurrection. We must keep hold of the fundamental truth that a New Humanity was inaugurated at the Resurrection of Christ Jesus! And this monumental reality must also *occupy* the heart of Sophia's wisdom, the Rose of the World. The point where these two dimensions—panorama and path—intersected *in time* was the junction of the upright and horizontal beams of the Cross at the time of the First Coming. Now, in the time of the Second Coming, we may in a sense say that Christianity as an *historical* religion is one among the petals of the Rose of the World, whereas what we may call *Christosophy*, the *eternal* union of Christ and Sophia, occupies its center. Christosophy functions both as a heart, taking in and recirculating the life-blood of pre-Christian religions, and as a lung, breathing out a renewing fragrance to all the world religions as they are slowly Christianized (or Sophianized). It is a most difficult, delicate, and challenging task to communicate such a teaching in our secular, materialistic time, for it requires that the universal nature of both Christ, the Lamb, and Sophia, the Bride of the Lamb, first be fully grasped—a work that will require the collaboration of many in times to come.



Immaculate Conception
Francisco de Zurbarán

⁶ The idea of resurrection is proclaimed, for example, in Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity—perhaps also in the specifically esoteric teaching of Islam cultivated primarily by the Sufis. Yet, although it is proclaimed as a *goal*, the actual *attainment* of resurrection is the unique mystery of Christianity. In the words of John: "*Christ is the first born from among the dead*" (Rev. 1:5)—that is, the new Adam or the new human being of the future.

The Stars Are Shining: Three Summers in France

Natalia Haarahiltunen

There have been now three annual conferences in France (2015-2017), where I have been able to participate together with my husband Markku.

We are living in Helsinki, Finland. When we arrived in Grans, Provence, for the first conference, with the title of “The Mission of Mary Magdalene in our Time,” we had just had some very big changes in our lives. We were ever so happy to meet Estelle Isaacson for the first time. By then Estelle had written and published her visions about Mary Magdalene in three volumes, whereby the last volume was situated primarily in the South of France. We had invited Robert Powell to Finland twice, but this was now our first time to go for a pilgrimage with people and get to know a larger Sophia Community.

These wonderful conferences have been organized by a French woman, Laurence Penetrat, who was brave enough to ask Robert and Estelle to come to France and who has been doing an enormous amount of work during these three years! She was facing all the organizational trials with her amazing flexibility and humor! She was fighting as a knightess and also looking after us as a mother to get the doors opened for us—to get us to the buses in time and so on. We'll never forget you, Laurence!

Sun in Virgo



View from above the cave
of Mary Magdalene

On that first pilgrimage of ours in 2015 to the South of France we went to the cave of Mary Magdalene at Sainte-Baume, where there is the most amazing view to be seen over the landscape of Provence. What a powerful and impressive place it is!

Many of us felt the joyous mood of coming together and meeting each other for the first time here on the physical level. Many life stories were shared and we got more of an idea of our common interests, goals and tasks.

Robert was focusing strongly on the “Our Father” prayer—the Lord’s prayer—which was enlivened powerfully through the etheric movement of our eurythmy gestures celebrated communally. Fifty participants from America and Europe honored the prayers in their different languages, spoken by a native speaker from each country—following one after the other. In this way, we honored the universality of this great prayer over one hundred times during the week!

It seemed from our conversations with participants from so many different locations that many are doing their Sophia work quite alone. O, how sweet it was now to experience our work together around the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge in connection to the “Our Father” in prayer eurythmy. We were working on our fallen nature in relation to our present world that is so much in conflict. There were moments when we felt a joy probably somewhat similar to that of the early Christians, when running to the sandy Mediterranean where, having somehow made its way across the Mediterranean, the boat of Magdalene's little company of seven landed; or while being in the crypt of the abbey of St. Victor in Marseille receiving Estelle's vision concerning the beautiful sermons and services that were held there by Lazarus for the people of that region. In awe and wonder, we were so touched that we could not hold back our tears in that little chapel in the crypt. We also visited the wonderful church dedicated to Martha in Tarascon.



The beach at
Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer

The joy of this first year in the South of France was inspiring for our spiritual work together with our Sophia group back home in Finland, preparing us for the coming times of ever deepening conflict, tension and divisiveness. What happened in the same year: the terrorist attack by gunmen and then suicide bombers in Paris on November 13th, and then on July 14th of the following year in Nice when a truck drove into a crowd (not forgetting also the vicious attack and murder of a priest by two ISIS militants in a church near Rouen in Northern France on July 26, 2016) – these events seemed to mark the horrible beginnings of Christ's descent into the eighth sub-earthly sphere that commenced in June, 2016. That time was to be felt also on an individual level as a period of becoming ever more aware of one's karmic burdens and of the struggle to find inner peace and also centeredness. For all the horror of these events, having lived through them has seemed to serve to deepen the relationships among people.

Sun in Leo

The focus of the next year's conference in September, 2016 turned more westward from the sites of Magdalene, Martha and Lazarus to those of Parsifal and Kyot in the little village of Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert. Estelle's editor and publisher Jim Wetmore came to Saint-Guilhem with a stack of freshly printed copies of Estelle's new book titled *The Grail Bearer*. In this book much attention is given to this picturesque small French village surrounded by impressive mountains, which looked at first glance like the guardians of this place. William or Guillaume (Guilhem) d'Orange—known as “Kyot” in the Grail story—had done penance there and received from Charlemagne a piece of the Holy Cross, which is still kept on display in the village church, alongside the relics of St. Guillaume.



Our ancient conference
room in Saint-Guilhem

We spent our whole week in this powerful place. The time in Saint-Guilhem was dramatically intensified by the loud sounds of thunderstorms that lasted almost the whole night, echoing throughout that small valley. Sleeping through the night was almost impossible, and staying in such close proximity to the holy relics was an intense and humbling experience.

On one of the mornings we climbed a mountain to Kyot's hunting lodge. It was so difficult a path that we all helped each other to climb ever higher to the top, where we finally greeted the sky and heaven above with our prayers and songs. It was an unforgettable journey, not only because of the view and the site, but also because the arduous effort needed to make the ascent gave us the opportunity to show genuine loving concern for each other, in order for everyone to be able to reach the top. One member of our group was injured and could not make it up there. The process of helping and healing the ones who were in need continued during the week. We were delving ever more deeply into the lives and incarnations of the Grail family, and with Robert we were deepening into the Prayer Sequence, which was to be celebrated at the end of the conference.

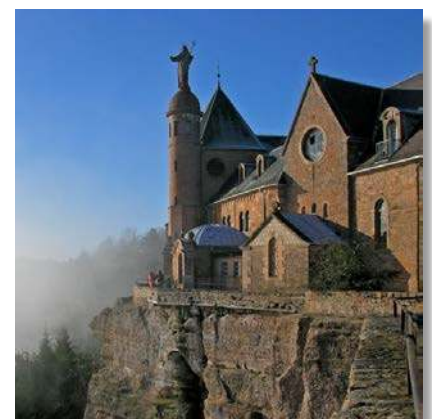


Kyot's hunting lodge

We descended towards the treasures of Mother Earth by visiting an incredibly vast underground cave (magically bejeweled with stalactites and stalagmites) located quite close to our village. Having been deeply touched by our communal experiences together with Mother Nature, our hearts could open more fully to an awareness of the immense suffering of the French people burdened by the recent terrorist attacks. With hearts fully engaged in present time, we had come as Grail bearers to offer our Grail cup toward the holding and honoring of the Grail bearers of the past. We concluded the week with a powerful celebration of the Sophia Grail Circle, building together the axis of a rose cross with the prayer to the Father in the heights and the Mother in the depths, invoking horizontally the Holy Spirit to be sent all around the Earth to all peoples and nations. We then created the red roses around the cross with the most beautiful prayers. We too truly wanted to follow the arduous and narrow path of that cross of the world.

Sun in Cancer

The final part of this trilogy of Sophia gatherings in France took place in Alsace, near Mount Sainte-Odile (Odilienberg), in the beginning of August, 2017. During our time together, we learned how St. Odile was and still is a powerful guide for those who seek the Holy Grail. This time we were a larger group of participants, 65 altogether. This conference took place earlier than the other two conferences, so I think that more people were still on their summer holidays and could take part more easily. We had experienced the first year's conference under the watchful care of the Sun in Virgo. In the second year it was the time of Leo, and this time we were cradled in the arms of Cancer. The weather was warm and full,



Mount Sainte-Odile

and there was such a big family gathering of Crabs that we celebrated four birthdays during the week! These celebrations gave space for spontaneous surprises: friends recited from the Kalevala and from Goethe, and sang Celtic rounds and danced beneath the rising moon singing “Under the watchful care of the Holy Grail.” And as for the search for the Grail, we were there in Grail territory again: the Grail that weaves in between the hierarchies and humanity, between past and present in holy places, in hearts where the Foundation Stone of Love is laid and where it is living, in the moments of shared heart spaces, in the questions that need to be asked! What was central, then, for this year...?

This time there was much weaving and movement. For the first time we danced choreocosmos, accompanied by Alla, a wonderful Russian pianist, playing music by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Bruckner for us. We went to St. Odile's beautiful monastery nearby on Mount Sainte-Odile, which evoked a sense of protection through the structure of the site in an undisturbed marriage with the warmth of the earth, and felt like a warm embrace around us. We also went to Colmar to witness



Trekking through the Ermitage forest

the healing masterpiece the Isenheim altar. And the next day we trekked together through the Ermitage forest in Arlesheim, Switzerland, to the place of the former Grail castle on the hill Hornikopf. O, that miraculous forest with its tender chalk caves!

After having visited the ninth-century Grail sites in Arlesheim, directly adjacent to the Goetheanum in Dornach, together we walked through the doors of the Goetheanum. Some of us did so with shared understanding and pain for what could have been there, but is not. There we encountered another piece of art intended for the healing of humanity in the form of the great statue of the Representative of Humanity carved by Rudolf Steiner assisted by the English sculptor Edith Maryon. We could greet and deeply behold this magnificent wooden carved statue for a moment as well.

Here at the Goetheanum one could share many other moments. However, not all of us were always present at the same places at the same time, so these moments shall remain in our private recollections. This time we were so many in our Grail company – 72 for our Ermitage tour and 65 for the conference in Alsace – that even on the last evening I saw some participants' faces for the first time. During the week there was much deepening into what is meant by “beholding” and how we are able to learn to see and behold each other as a preparation for beholding Christ one day.

Around fifty people attended the first conference, which was held in Provence, France. Some forty people attended the second conference – the one in Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert. Moreover, about fifteen people participated in all three of the Grail conferences in France. Having participants from Australia was a new dimension at this third gathering. Also, many more people came from the Scandinavian countries. There were more intense questions in the air concerning the future of our Sophia work: where could the next conferences take place? how could more support be given to each other? how should we collaborate together? I believe these three meetings have given courage to people for their own initiatives back home, although for us in Finland it is still a question of how to keep the fire burning throughout the cold winter times! There is also a growing need to help other people carry their tasks and questions.

The highlight of this week for me was the ceremony we had on our last day. It was wonderful to have a communal experience of overflowing unconditional love, while celebrating the new Sophia Grail celebration with choreocosmos, having practiced the cosmic dances for the whole week. In this celebration, the first seven cosmic dances related to Christ's seven last words from the cross, seen on the one hand in connection with the ranks of the spiritual hierarchies, and on the other hand with the inner layers of the Earth through which Christ descended, and then with his resurrection body ascended back up again to his encounter with Mary Magdalene in the garden of the Holy Sepulcher on Easter Sunday morning. The first eight cosmic dances were to music composed by Joseph Haydn—seven pieces for Christ's seven last words from the cross, and an extra piece which we danced for Christ's descent to the Mother—followed by Mozart's beautiful "Ave Verum Corpus" for the moment of Christ receiving his resurrection body from the Earth Mother after his descent to her realm in the heart of the Earth. This in turn was followed by the finale of Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy" expressing the joyous mood of the resurrection! That experience still resounds in my body, and having shared that communal experience, I feel much love for all seekers of the Grail. I also received inspiration concerning the new Star Wisdom ("Astrosophy") while in France—and also had a chance to talk and share about stars and charts with the new friends I made there. I hope there will be possibilities in the future to share more astrosophical questions with people, because we are only two people in the whole of Finland studying it!

Greetings to all friends far and wide whom I met during these three years of our Sophia gatherings in France, and to friends still to be met in the future of this Sophia work! If I look back over these three years, in short, they appear as:

2015—Joyous coming together, innocent and pure as the *white* forms of Mediterranean waves!

2016—Powerful time, *red*, like the color of the ground of the highlands in France, and fiery as lightning in the Valley of the Holy Cross.

2017—Weaving together, weaving in between people, beholding people and times under the watchful care of the Holy Grail and its guides and protectors! Under the beautiful *blue* sky of Alsace and its smooth refreshing mountain air.

Finally, thank you *France*, thank you *Laurence*! O la la, c'est la vie!!!

Comment by Robert Powell

It is wonderful that Natalia has written this beautiful report of the series of three Grail conferences in France, whereby the first one, whose theme was Mary Magdalene, was *implicitly* dedicated to the Grail (rather than explicitly). The fourth Grail conference in this series will take place in southern Germany, exploring the Grail connections there. Central to this exploration is Rudolf Steiner's indication:

Southern Germany should have become the new Grail castle of the new spiritual knights and [thereby] the cradle of future events. The personalities whom we know as Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, Herder, and so on, had prepared the spiritual space well. Kaspar Hauser should have gathered around him all those who lived in this well-prepared spiritual space.

As Kaspar Hauser communicated to Estelle Isaacson on July 2, 2009:

You have great spiritual protection because of the childlike forces which are streaming into you. Spiritually, children have an added measure of spiritual protection. When people are baptized in a proper way they are given extra spiritual protection because a part of them is truly being made new; they have the opportunity to connect to their childlike forces and become as a little child who *deserves* the kingdom of God. And I, the being who was Kaspar Hauser, am an inspiration for the sacrament of baptism. I am the one who escorts the childlike forces—forces which belong to each soul who receives true baptism. This is my work, for my heart is with the being of each soul who has not fallen, and I care for this aspect of the soul. I work to maintain the purity and innocence of those forces when they are called up to enter into the soul of any human being, such as you have experienced. And so I assist you in keeping this childlike part of you innocent and pure and safe and protected.

This indication can be seen in relation to Rudolf Steiner's statement about Parsifal, the Grail king, representing the pure "I."

As well as entering into the deep and profound Grail mysteries connected with Kaspar Hauser, we shall also make excursions to Grail sites located in the area. The week of this fourth Grail conference with Estelle Isaacson and Robert Powell will begin with arrival on the afternoon of Sunday, April 5, 2018 in time for dinner at 7:00 pm followed by an introduction to the week, which will end with departure after breakfast on Saturday, April 11, 2018. This Grail conference will take place in the Sophia Hall ("Sophiensaal"), Herzogstrasse 5a, 86981 Kinsau, Germany. The focus in cosmic dance will be the Mystery of Golgotha—how to enter into this Mystery through music and movement—with musical accompaniment by Russian pianist Alla Fastovskaya. A flyer giving further details of this Grail conference will be posted on the website of the Sophia Foundation (www.sophiafoundation.org). Accommodation is limited, so early registration for this conference is recommended. Contact: Doris Wolf, Badestrasse 23, 20148 Hamburg, Germany. Tel: +49-172-6613437. Email: doxewo@gmail.com. Italian participants contact: Uberta Sebregondi, Via della Fonte di Fauno 20, 00153 Roma, Italia. Tel: +39-06-86904627 / Mobile: +39-335-6749935. Email: usebregondi@gmail.com.

A Visit to the Goetheanum on August 4, 2017

Angelika Jenal

We all know that we are *together* here and now on this beautiful planet Earth to be *with* one another and *for* one another in order to learn *from* one another, so as to work to shape the future positively, even if at the present time only in a rudimentary way—a future in which more Light, more Love, more Life, and more Peace prevails...not just for humanity, but also for the kingdoms of Nature. In the spirit of this higher sense for existence, and only in this higher sense, may we be grateful for the many possibilities of connecting with one another. Through our connections we are lifted up, and in the course of time, these connections take on shape and form. The readers of *Starlight*—spread around the world—can experience this connection through their participation on some level in the various Sophia Foundation workshops and activities. I offer many thanks to those who report on these activities, and feel gratitude also to the editorial board of *Starlight* for providing this possibility of communicating with one another.

Here I would like to refer to something of a *complimentary phenomenon*: more than 60 people from at least a dozen countries came together at the Goetheanum on August 4, 2017, and took part in three parallel guided tours of the Goetheanum. Two tours were in English, guided by Ronald Templeton and Rozanne Hartmann, and one tour was in German, led by Esther Gersther. Here I would like to take the opportunity to thank those who were responsible for the careful organization and preparation of this day and for guiding us through the unfolding plan. Thanks also to those in charge of the catering at the Goetheanum, who provided coffee and cake to our group during the hour preceding our guided tour on this special occasion of our visit to the Goetheanum, which happened to coincide with Estelle Isaacson's birthday.

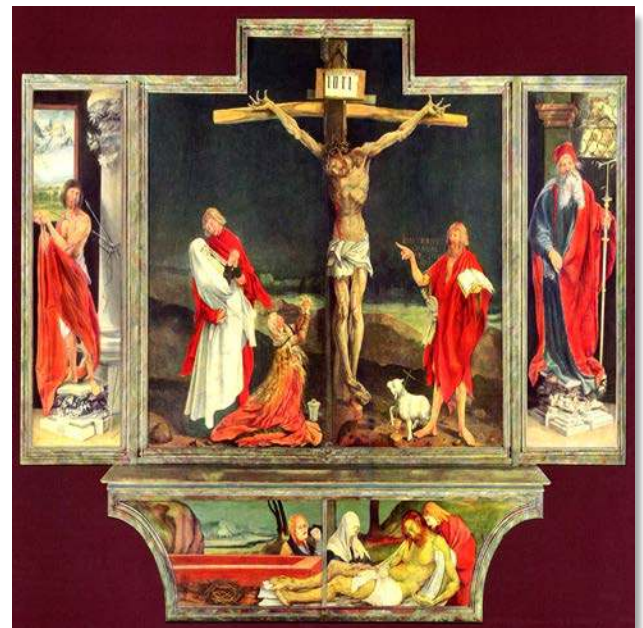
It was a special group that came to the Goetheanum on August 4th during the quiet period of the summer break there. The participants came from many parts of the world: New Zealand, Australia, the United States, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Many knew one another already from the previous Grail conferences in France. This year's seminar was envisaged as a continuation from the previous year's Grail seminar in a beautiful little town near Montpellier—Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert—of significance for the Grail story. Themes central to this year's seminar were: *The Search for the Holy Grail—Through the Eyes of Repanse de Schoye*⁷—*The Goetheanum as a Modern Grail Castle*.

The seminar took place from July 1st to August 6th in Hohwald, near Mount Sainte-Odile in Alsace, France. The wonderful living etheric quality of Nature there provided a most fruitful terrain for our Grail quest. The daily study with Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson supported the spiritual work with the seven I AM sayings of Christ from the Gospel of John as well as the work with the seven Words (sayings) of Christ from the Cross, drawn from the four Gospels. In this spiritual work a correspondence between the seven I AM sayings and the seven Words from the Cross and the seven chakras and, moreover, the seven planets came to expression. Robert guided the group

⁷ This is the subtitle of a Grail book: Estelle Isaacson's *The Grail Bearer: Tellings from the Ever Primal Story Through the Eyes of Repanse de Schoye* (Taos, NM: LogoSophia, 2016).

through cosmic dance, working with eurythmy forms for the seven planets, moving to Haydn's music composed for the seven Words from the Cross, which was a very profound and powerful experience. He also led us through a sequence of prayers to music composed by Franz Schubert. On the last day of the conference we participated in a celebration of the seven Words from the Cross, moving in cosmic dance to Haydn's wonderful music, followed by Christ's descent to Shambhala, to the Earth Mother, from whom he received his resurrection body. Here we moved in cosmic dance to Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus* to celebrate this event. For the conclusion of this celebration we moved in cosmic dance to the finale of Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* to celebrate Christ's resurrection. With this cosmic dance in which some 60 people participated, we had the experience of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon our group as we honored Christ's resurrection at the culmination of this special celebration. The text of the celebration is based on words received in vision by Estelle Isaacson. The inspiring music composed by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert was played for us by the wonderful Russian pianist Alla Fastovskaya.

We made a number of excursions during this uplifting week dedicated to the mysteries of the Holy Grail. Our first excursion was to Mount Sainte-Odile, where we visited Sainte Odile's convent. There was much to explore at the convent, and we recalled that Rudolf Steiner visited here with Edouard Schuré shortly before World War One broke out. On this outing we also went down to the foot of Mount Sainte-Odile to the ruins of the hospital of Saint Odile at Niedermünster, regarding which Estelle Isaacson has made important contributions in her new book.⁸ Our second excursion was to the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar, where we were able to take in Grünewald's great masterpiece, *The Isenheim Altar*, portraying the Mystery of Golgotha. Our third excursion—a highpoint—was to the ancient Grail sites in the region of the Hermitage in Arlesheim, followed by a tour of the Goetheanum as the new Grail castle in our time. Our guide through the ancient Grail sites was Kurt Jauch, who has written an in-depth book about these sites.⁹ His book also presents research into the area around Mount Sainte-Odile as the region from which some of the Grail family came—including Titurel, the founder of the Grail family, who came to Arlesheim from Barr, the location of the summer house of Edouard Schuré, located at the foot of Mount Saint-Odile. It was in the Arlesheim Hermitage where Titurel built the ancient Grail castle.



The Isenheim Altar
(detail)

⁸ Estelle Isaacson, *The Younger Kyot: Tellings of Mages & Maidens—Shimmering Through the Grail Land of Grace* (Taos, NM: LogoSophia, 2017).

⁹ Kurt Jauch, *Unser Leben ist geheimnisvoll nach Mass und Zahl geordnet. Die Gralsgeschichte im Lichte dieser Ordnung* (Berlin: Pro BUSINESS, 2008).

After our tour of the ancient Grail sites in Arlesheim led by Kurt Jauch, we went to the Goetheanum, nearby in Dornach, as the new Grail building for our time. It was the first visit to the Goetheanum for many in our group. The highlights of the guided tour were the great hall with the colored glass windows, Rudolf Steiner's Statue of the Representative of Humanity (this Statue is also referred to as the Group) and Rudolf Steiner's atelier, where he died, all of which undoubtedly helped to make this visit to the Goetheanum an unforgettable experience, especially for those who came from far afield. In addition, the profound content presented during the week by Dr. Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson was an ongoing highlight of this Grail conference. Two articles—one by Robert Powell (*Historical Grail Stream*) and one by Estelle Isaacson (*Rudolf Steiner's Statue: The Representative of Humanity*)—were given to each participant during the week, and these are included in this issue of *Starlight*.

**The Human Soul
and
Rudolf Steiner's Statue
"The Representative of Humanity"**

Estelle Isaacson

While I was inwardly in conversation with Nicodemus,¹ he gave a teaching regarding the Human Soul, and how the Human Soul originally came into being.

As you know, the word "astral" signifies "of the stars." The astral body, which is the soul, is then a "body of the stars." Through the astral body we commune with stellar beings. The mystery I wish to open to you is very vast, but let us at least make a start in opening and contemplating this great mystery.

Rudolf Steiner proclaimed "Human Soul!" in his *Foundation Stone Meditation*. Was he simply addressing us "as souls"? Was he calling upon our individual souls to listen to the words he was bringing down from the heights? Or did he see and know something more than this?

The mystery of these two words "Human Soul" is incomprehensibly deep. As each of the three verses of the *Foundation Stone Meditation* begins with these words, it is imperative that we penetrate their immense significance. In part, these words address what every soul may take as a clarion call to its awakening—a call not only to hear and receive as an individual soul the words as spoken, but a call also for the individual human soul to awaken to *the* Human Soul—which, we may say, is active in the soul of every human being.

¹ Nicodemus was a close disciple of Jesus (see John 3:1-21). In a forthcoming book, *Conversations in the Night*, Estelle Isaacson shares Nicodemus's teachings regarding a new star wisdom.

For within each human being is *both* the personal soul and the Human Soul. So sacred is this mystery that we must approach it with open, empty hearts. When in the *Foundation Stone Meditation* we hear, “Human Soul, thou livest in the limbs...; Human Soul, thou livest in the beat of heart and lung...; Human Soul, thou livest in the resting head...” it is the original Human Soul—of which our individuals souls are as droplets—that is being invoked.

As above, so below! As the human soul lives in the human being, so also does the Human Soul live in the astral world. Know that I am lifting only a corner of this sublime mystery. Nonetheless we must start somewhere, so that the further questions necessary to raise the veil ever further may be evoked, leading us onward in our awareness of the mystery of this Presence. The mystery of the Human Soul is that of the Being who, we could say, is the *human counterpart* of the collective community of *all astral beings*.

The beings of the astral world assisted in bringing forth the Human Soul. In the course of cosmic and human evolution, the Human Soul was brought into being through the collaboration of the astral beings—that is, the Hierarchies—under the direction of Christ, He Who created them under the direction of the Father.

The Human Soul came into being as a *new* creation. So profound was this new creation that all other created beings, the astral beings, needed to rest from their labors. For this reason a Pralaya followed, wherein the Human Soul was incubated, so to speak, in a protected space—gestating till the time would come for the Human Soul to bear down and commence the work of bringing *life* to the human being, life that would come from the starry realms through the Human Soul, Who would breathe life into the limbs, into the rhythmic system, and into the head, or brain, of the human being. Thus would the Human Soul replicate itself within the human being, so that each person, through his or her individual soul, might remain connected with the Human Soul—and *thereby connected with the starry realms and the stellar beings who continually work for human evolution*.

What I am showing you is most difficult to describe. When human beings work on purifying their soul, that soul is, so to say, “recollected” in the Human Soul. This is like an experience of resurrection. A “remembering” takes hold of the soul, bringing with it an immediate and mighty change: the individual experiences on the one hand healing and humility, while on the other gaining a profound sense of his or her divine nature and nobility.

It is the Human Soul living in each human being that is addressed with the words: “Human Soul! Thou livest in the limbs...Thou livest in the beat of heart and lung...Thou livest in the resting head!” The Human Soul is a Being eternally served by the Hierarchies! The Human Soul sacrificed in order to descend. The Human Soul descended to work in the depths in order to awaken human beings to their forgotten divinity.

The Earth lives in the umbra of Lucifer's sphere; likewise does the human being walk in the shadows, wander homeless, feel consigned to darkness. Lucifer desires to keep human beings asleep to their true divinity. And although Lucifer will have his season, there comes a season also for awakening. As souls awaken, Lucifer's season is shortened. For some, Lucifer's season comes fully to an end. This occurs when an individual soul has been so filled with Divine Light that Lucifer can no longer cast his shadow over it. Such souls shine with the light of humility and need no longer wander in darkness.

The Virgin Mary was one who in her life emulated the Human Soul, and thus remained ever pure. In Mary's conversation with Jesus before the Baptism in the Jordan, the Divine Spirit united—on the Earth—with the Human Soul, embodied in all purity in Mary. Through this weaving between Mary and Jesus, Christ on his path of descent into incarnation was united with the Immaculate Soul of Mary. Because of this, through her intercession, the Virgin Mary leads us to the purification of our own souls also, so that the Human Soul may unite with the Divine Spirit in each of us, just as took place aforetime in Mary.

Rudolf Steiner's Statue "The Representative of Humanity"

Having thus laid out the conversation with Nicodemus regarding the Human Soul, I wish now to share a further teaching on this theme, which came while seated before Rudolf Steiner's great statue "The Representative of Humanity" at the Goetheanum.²

As I sat before the statue of the Representative of Humanity I began to see *through* it, and in this way beheld the working of Christ together with certain human beings who were seeding the impulse for humanity to take up the work of the Human Soul upon Earth. I saw the Patriarchs and Prophets of ancient Israel: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. I saw the Buddha, and many others coming into time to take their place on the world stage. They were holding the place for *the* Representative of Humanity—Christ, who would eventually appear. These Ancients came to the Earth to plant in human souls an impulse that would enable them to reconnect, through Christ, with the Human Soul. If one can look *through* the statue of the Representative of Humanity, one beholds a multidimensional reality, a continuous "building-up" over time. For example, looking at the image imaginatively, one may travel backward through the ages to Moses, through whose eyes one then sees the statue as the future prophecy of the incarnation of Christ in a human being. Looking at the image in this way awakens one to the insight that Moses once stood as representative of humanity, preparing his people for the coming of *the* Representative of Humanity.

Just as we can look *through* the statue into antiquity, so also may we behold it as it stands for our present time. Then we see how the statue leads us into connection with Christ in the etheric realm surrounding the Earth. In just this way we may be led inwardly to the first three verses of

² This teaching was received on September 9, 2016.

the *Foundation Stone Meditation*. Rudolf Steiner indicated in 1923 that the words of this meditation were spoken to him by Christ. At the Christmas Foundation Meeting in 1923, the verses of the *Foundation Stone Meditation* were spoken by Christ *through* Rudolf Steiner as a means of preparing human beings for His Second Coming—now in the etheric realm—which commenced in 1933 and will continue to intensify over time. Each of the first three verses of this meditation begins with the words, “Human Soul, thou livest in the...”. With these words, Christ, from the etheric realm, is addressing the soul of each human being.

It is a profound experience to face the statue, looking upon it until one finds not only that one has entered *into* the statue, but from within is *looking out* through the eyes of the Representative of Humanity. The gaze Rudolf Steiner captured while carving the statue then becomes our own gaze. Rudolf Steiner must himself have had the experience of seeing from within the statue. Only this could explain how powerfully he captured the countenance of Christ and his adversaries. We may ask the question: What did Rudolf Steiner experience looking out from “within” the statue? This would be, by analogy, like casting a relief of something in such a way as to unite with the formative forces coming together to create the final form. Much is revealed when taking an interest in what lives and weaves around form, for it is the living formative forces that bring form into being.



Face of Christ
from *Representative of Humanity*

I understood through such beholding that the Representative of Humanity is the *One* who represents *every human being*. Through His example in overcoming the three temptations two thousand years ago, human beings also may in due course pass through them.

In the statue, Christ holds at bay the forces represented by these three temptations. How does He do this? Simply by being Himself—a *powerful being of radiant Divine Love*. He stands together with the opposing forces, overcoming the tempters simply by being in their midst. As he does so, what is He gazing upon?

To see from Christ’s perspective, through the eyes of Christ of He who stands between the two forces opposing Him, is strengthening. It is a blessing of courage and strength for human souls to know that Christ—Divine Love—stands with His penetrating gaze in the very midst of the tempters.

But there is another wonderful aspect to this perspective on the statue, for it reveals to us also souls on their path into incarnation, souls making their way down to the Earth. And it is possible for them also to receive strength and courage through beholding—in their case still from spiritual realms—Christ, as the Representative of Humanity, holding at bay the forces opposing Him. Gazing out through the eyes of Christ we see incarnating souls descending toward the Earth from heavenly heights.

But I was shown something else in connection with the gesture of the upraised hand of the Representative of Humanity. I beheld etherically, not physically, that He held a whip wherewith to separate the evil from the Good through the power of unification.

Commentary by Robert Powell

The statue is an expression of Rudolf Steiner's inner response in 1923 to what was then coming upon humankind. It is important to grasp that the statue does not depict Christ Jesus solely as the Representative of Humanity, but— standing amid the forces of three temptations in the wilderness—as He Who overcame them. Rudolf Steiner described these three temptations and their significance in his lectures on *The Fifth Gospel*, in which he distinguishes between Lucifer the light bearer, and Satan, whom he calls by the ancient Persian name Ahriman, the prince of darkness.

The first temptation was presented to Jesus solely by Lucifer, who showed Him that He could rule over all the kingdoms of the world if He would but bow down and worship him. As depicted in the statue, this is represented by Lucifer, upside down at the top right of the statue, held at bay by the upraised left arm of Christ Jesus, who in response to this first temptation said: "You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve" (Matthew 4:10).

The second temptation was presented to Jesus by Lucifer and Ahriman together, urging Him to plunge from the pinnacle of the temple, saying: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, He will give His angels charge of you... on their hands, they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:6). This scene is depicted in the statue by Lucifer interlocking from above with Ahriman below, a short distance from the right side of Christ Jesus. The "pinnacle of the temple" signifies the conscience and consciousness of Christ Jesus, who overcomes this temptation by remaining upright, striding forward, not casting Himself down by blindly entrusting Himself to the angels.

The third temptation was presented to Jesus solely by Ahriman alone, who taunted Him to "turn stones into bread" (Matthew 4:3). Christ Jesus responded: "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). This scene is depicted in the statue by Ahriman below the feet of Christ Jesus, striving to draw Him down out of His connection with the Divine. Ahriman, below and slightly to the right of the Savior, is held in place by the commanding gesture of His right arm and hand. This temptation, which seeks to lead Christ Jesus to focus solely upon the material level of existence—turning stones into bread—was overcome by Him through directing consciousness to the source of everything, including stones and bread, to the Creator.

At the present time the Christ "I" on His path of descent to Shambhala—the golden realm of the Earth Mother at the center of the Earth—is in the period from June 5, 2016 to April 14, 2028 traversing the realm of the eighth subearthly sphere, the "divisive layer" or the "Cain and Abel realm," wherein He works to unify the disparate forces in this divisive sphere. Now, scourging, at least as it comes to expression in connection with Christ Jesus, is just such a unifying force. As Valentin Tomberg writes: "Just as [2000 years ago Christ] received the blows of scourging, so He will likewise be able to reach, touch, and move people. He will touch those who are in despair and instill comfort and courage in them. This moving touch is a consequence of the scourging, and it will cause courage to flow for a new effort of creativity." We may say then that Christ in

the etheric realm transforms scourging into touching, in order to bestow courage when we must be strong—and this serves to unify human beings in their true essence of being.

This in turn may evoke in us a remembering of our incarnational process, during which we received the courage to be born upon the Earth. But we must now take up the work of the transformation of evil upon the Earth—in the way shown to us by Christ. Christ brought to us the force of Divine Love and the power of Divine Love that comes if one opens oneself to receive Christ's Love—a Love that by its very nature overcomes evil, as can be seen by contemplating the statue of the Representative of Humanity in the midst of the opposing forces. Following on from this level of *overcoming* evil, is that of participating together with Christ in the work of *transforming* evil.

In summary, when human beings incarnate upon the Earth, they do so out of purest love for the Earth and for humanity. Christ, now present in the Earth's etheric aura, helps us awaken to this pure love—and through it to Divine Love—that we may combat and then transform evil through the power of love, as did He two thousand years ago. That He continues to do so now is shown in a most inspiring way in Rudolf Steiner's statue of the Representative of Humanity.

Lastly, I just received this message from a Choreocosmos participant:

In the last few days I read over and over again Estelle's words drawn from the wisdom of the Holy Grail. Her depiction of Rudolf Steiner's Statue of the Representative of Humanity communicated something very profound to me. On Thursday I had to deal with a terrible situation. The basement at the home of my parents, because of a leak in a water pipe, stood three feet under water. I had to call various workers and coordinate the rescue procedure for the basement. Usually in such stressful situations I feel myself "on overwhelm" and lose my perspective and command of the situation. This time, suddenly with my inner eye I saw the Statue in front of me and the words arose within: "Christ in me." I sensed new strength and regained my inner balance.

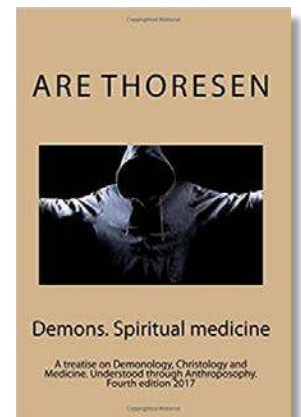
Grail Conference in Alsace

Are Thoresen

Some impressions after a week with Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson spent in the Grail region at Hohwald near Mount Saint-Odile in France, following the footsteps of Parsifal: There is infinitely much that could be said after this week with Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson and about 60 other Grail-seekers from many countries world-over. The days were filled with cosmic-eurythmic dance, lectures, conversations, excursions and walks following in the footsteps of Parsifal, Anfortas, Herzeloyde and Titurel in the ancient landscape between Mount Saint-Odile, France, and Arlesheim, Switzerland. Elemental beings, dragons and demons were also present this week, but we will let these descriptions rest for another occasion. However, I would like to share here and say something more about two of my personal experiences, or rather insights, concerning the Grail story: Firstly, the second aspect of Parsifal's failure to pose the right

question, namely Anfortas's lack of the right response or answer. Secondly, why the Grail was kept at a considerable distance from the Grail castle itself (the Grail castle was not a castle in the ordinary sense, but more of a Scandinavian farm-house or chief seat, built in both “stave” and layering techniques).

First to the second aspect of the Parsifal question: Anfortas's answer. In my recently published book *Demons—Spiritual Medicine*, I have explained in detail about the Ahrimanic and Luciferic demons. These demonic structures in our organism depend largely on the human, individual and general karmic traces of the earth. These tracks have been described throughout the ages as the weaving of the Norns, or as the disease-promoting earth radiation known in *geomantic/ geometry* and described by Rudolf Steiner in his lecture “Geographical Medicine.” The cosmic-karmic networks or “weaves” of this earth can be manipulated and/or worked on to be shut down in many different ways by various “house cleaners” and “radiant cleaners.” However, the only really effective way or method, in my experience, is that you ask the demonic-pathological earth force about its righteousness and origin in order to ask for forgiveness, as we humans have caused the demonization of these forces. In my experience, it is always human actions that have created this network that many call *earth radiation*. This second aspect of Parsifal and Anfortas's relationship—Anfortas's answer (or lack thereof)—which is not discussed as much as the first aspect—Parsifal's question (or lack thereof)—was made clear to me during this week, especially as Robert Powell presented all his lectures and reflections in both English and German. I noticed that the presence of the Ahrimanic demons, whose existence Robert was also aware of, and whose mission is to prevent his work for Christ, became stronger and more expanded every time Robert spoke German. I was aware that this area in France was the site of several concentration camps during the Second World War, and that the hatred for the German language in this area had been great, and had nourished and stimulated the demonic forces of the 9th sub-earthly layer of the Earth where the hatred had originated. I also found that the demonic forces that seek to oppose the mission of the Christ and Anthroposophy had purposefully chosen German as their language through Hitler's third Reich to counteract the German-language focus of Anthroposophy. Only an intense and intended eurythmic invocation of the second angelic hierarchy—the Sun hierarchy (Kyriotetes, Dynamis, and Exusiai)—was able to counteract this demonic power.



Now to consider the fact that the Grail was stored several hundred meters from the Grail castle itself. This fact is, of course, inscribed in the entire etheric geography of the area. Over and around the place where the Grail was kept, there rested an intense light, like a very huge rainbow that was reinforced with a golden light. This light had a penetrating and transforming power that penetrated into the body and soul in a way that can only be compared to X-rays. It seemed to me as though the light from the Grail resembled the described light from the Ark of the Covenant. And as with the Ark of the Covenant, its power was of such a magnitude that it could even kill someone if this power would be in too high or strong a dose and if the person was unprepared for it.

A Note from Kelly Calegar

Dear Community,

A “*meteoric iron hello*” to you from *beautiful* North Carolina, where the Outer Banks span miles of pristine beaches, with powerful displays of air (wind), light, warmth, water, and silica (sand)! How quickly one is reminded of the power of the elements, and how quickly one will pray to the King of the Elements, Christ, for mercy!



I am still transcribing lectures and editing lectures for CD sales, though with two of three offspring getting married in the last three months, it has been slow going.

I encourage you to consider listening to these wisdom-filled spiritual teachings and life lessons that are so lovingly imparted through Robert’s spoken word. Even though they are recordings, I am continually surprised at how engaging they are.

I am currently working on *The Beatitudes, from Melbourne 2017*, where Robert addresses the 8th sub-earthly sphere, the sphere of divisiveness, which was opened in June of 2016, in relation to the 8th Beatitude, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake,” which is the remedy. I expect to be finished with this by mid-November.

Honestly, these lectures contain so much wisdom that after listening to them several times I am still gleaning profound insights to help me to awaken in the light of the words that are to be found above the portals of every true Mystery School: “Human Being, Know Thy Self!”...and in the light of the words of the Christ from our Beatitudes Celebration: “Fulfill your mission!”

Browse the selection of lectures available to you and let your angel guide you in choosing. I listen to these lectures while driving ... just about everywhere.

Check out the site – sophiaschoolofmovement.org – and allow yourself to be guided to the particular lectures that you are inwardly seeking.

A very, special thanks to Robert for his permission to allow these
treasures of Wisdom to be made available as CDs.

With love and gratitude,

Kelly Calegar

Choreocosmos
School of Cosmic and Sacred Dance
2018 Schedule of Workshops
with Robert Powell

August 5-11, 2018: The fourth annual Grail conference will take place in southern Germany, exploring the Grail connections there. Central to this exploration is Rudolf Steiner's indication:

Southern Germany should have become the new Grail castle of the new spiritual knights and [thereby] the cradle of future events. The personalities whom we know as Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, Herder, and so on, had prepared the spiritual space well. Kaspar Hauser should have gathered around him all those who lived in this well-prepared spiritual space.

As Kaspar Hauser indicated in a spiritual communication to Estelle Isaacson on July 2, 2009:

You have great spiritual protection because of the childlike forces which are streaming into you. Spiritually, children have an added measure of spiritual protection. When people are baptized in a proper way they are given extra spiritual protection because a part of them is truly being made new; they have the opportunity to connect to their childlike forces and become as a little child who *deserves* the kingdom of God. And I, the being who was Kaspar Hauser, am an inspiration for the sacrament of baptism. I am the one who escorts the childlike forces—forces which belong to each soul who receives true baptism. This is my work, for my heart is with the being of each soul who has not fallen, and I care for this aspect of the soul. I work to maintain the purity and innocence of those forces when they are called up to enter into the soul of any human being, such as you have experienced. And so I assist you in keeping this childlike part of you innocent and pure and safe and protected.

This indication can be seen in relation to Rudolf Steiner's statement about Parsifal, the Grail king, representing the pure "I."

As well as entering into the deep and profound Grail mysteries connected with Kaspar Hauser, we shall also make excursions to Grail sites located in the area. The week of this fourth Grail conference with Estelle Isaacson and Robert Powell will begin with arrival on the afternoon of Sunday, August 5, 2018 in time for dinner at 6:00 pm, followed by a concert with a piano trio playing music by Beethoven and Schubert. The workshop will end with departure after breakfast on Saturday, August 11, 2018. This Grail conference will take place in the Sophia Hall ("Sophiensaal"), Herzogstrasse 5a, 86981 Kinsau, Germany. The focus in cosmic dance will be the Journey of the Soul into Incarnation, with musical accompaniment by Italian pianist Fabio Berellini. A flyer giving further details of this Grail conference will be posted on the website of the Sophia Foundation sophiafoundation.org. Accommodation is limited, so early registration for this conference is recommended. Contact: Doris Wolf, Badestrasse 23, 20148 Hamburg, Germany. Tel: +49-172-6613437. Email: doxewo@gmail.com. Italian participants contact : Uberta Sebreghondi, Via della Fonte di Fauno 20, 00153 Roma, Italia. Tel: +39-06-86904627 / Mobile: +39-335-6749935. Email: usebreghondi@gmail.com.

August 12-19, 2018: “The Hebrew Alphabet & the Tree of Life—The 10 Sephiroth and the 22 Paths of Wisdom corresponding to the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot—the School of Sophia.” One-week workshop with the Shambhala Path (Sacred Dance) and Overview of Stars & Planets in 2018. Central to the Shambhala Path is working with the Lord’s Prayer in relation to the Tree of Life. Estelle Isaacson is planning to attend this workshop. She will present contributions to the theme when appropriate. Musical accompaniment by violinist Vitale Cotofana. Location: *Casa di Spiritualità Oasi Sacro Cuore (House of Spirituality: Sacred Heart Oasis)* in Assisi, Italy—oasisacrocuoreassisi.com. Arrival on August 12 for dinner at 7:00 pm; departure on August 19 after breakfast. English/German with Italian translation. Information: Uberta Sebreghondi, Tel: +39-06-86904627 / Mobile: +39-335-6749935. Email: usebreghondi@gmail.com.

August 19-24, 2018: “Attuning to the Stars: Star Gazing as a Spiritual Path.” 4½-day workshop with Choreocosmos and Star Mysteries—As above, so below.” This year the workshop will be focused on “The Great Teachers of Humanity.” English/German with Italian translation. Musical accompaniment by violinist Vitale Cotofana. Location: Titignano, east of Orvieto, south-west of Assisi. Accommodation and full board at Castle Titignano retreat center. Arrival on 19 August for dinner at 7:00 pm; departure on 24 August after breakfast. Information: Uberta Sebreghondi, Tel: +39-06-86904627 / Mobile: +39-335-6749935. Email: usebreghondi@gmail.com.

August 25-31, 2018: “Choreocosmos: International Week” in the spa hotel Casa di Salute—Raphael in Roncesano near Trient/Trento, Italy. “The Journey of the Soul into Incarnation,” with Italian concert pianist Fabio Berellini. Seventeenth graduation of the Choreocosmos School for Cosmic & Sacred Dance. Arrival on August 25 for dinner at 7:00 PM; departure on August 31 after breakfast. English/German with Italian translation. Information: Sally Ellis-Jones, Tel: +39-0461-724893 / Mobile: +39-3482-106251. Email: sally.ellis.jones@gmail.com.

August 31- September 2, 2018: “Choreocosmos Graduates Meeting” in the spa hotel Casa di Salute—Raphael in Roncesano near Trient/Trento, Italy. “Foundations of Choreocosmos: A Spiritual Path Arising from Eurythmy—The School of Christ & Sophia.” English/German with Italian translation. The focus in cosmic dance will be on a new way of working with the Foundation Stone Meditation. Musical accompaniment by Italian concert pianist Fabio Berellini (Cosmic and Sacred Dance). Information: Sally Ellis-Jones, Tel: +39-0461-724893 / Mobile: +39-3482-106251. Email: sally.ellis.jones@gmail.com.

Further Information in English: sophiafoundation.org. At this website the workshops and events taking place in the United States under the auspices of the Sophia Foundation are to be found, as well as Robert Powell’s workshops in Europe indicated above. Sophia Foundation Email: sophia@sophiafoundation.org.

Für weitere Informationen in deutscher Sprache: www.choreocosmos.info.
Email: katherine@choreocosmos.info.

Lorna Byrne's Message Concerning the Angels

Elizabeth Benner, *Starlight* subscriber

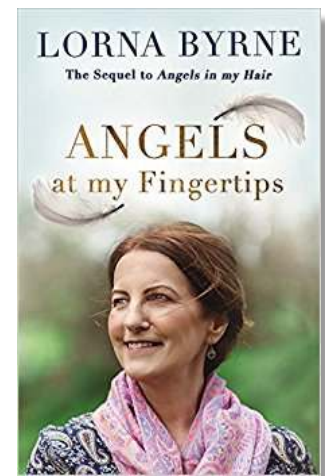
As someone interested in Choreocosmos, and as a reader of *Starlight*, I wanted to share something about Lorna Byrne's books. These works are making a significant impact on uniting humanity. Through her message concerning the angels, Lorna is awakening many to the presence of their guardian angel—no matter their religion or race. Thus, not only Catholics but also many Jewish communities, and also some leading Islamic theologians, have invited her to come and speak to their communities.

Lorna Byrne is a devout Catholic from Ireland, who sees angels with as much clarity as we see people. The angels helped her in her school years, when she was severely dyslexic. In fact, at that time she was presumed to be retarded. She did not even finish primary school, and that is partly what makes her writings so pure.

It is refreshing and touching to read her take on abortion, homosexuality, and religion—according to what she has received from God and the angels. I question a couple of her understandings; for example, she thinks reincarnation is a rare occurrence. But still, for a devout Catholic to even publicly acknowledge that reincarnation does occur is an important advancement for many of those who are reading her books.

In Lorna's most recent book, *Angels at my Fingertips*, there is an inspiring chapter on her experience of being taken back in time to witness the crucifixion—something that occurs for her each Easter. In the same vein, I am always inspired by Estelle Isaacson's visions and also by Judith von Halle's visions, and now through Lorna Byrne we have yet another window into spiritual realms – one that is very moving.

I find that Lorna Byrne's books are excellent "starter books" which can be given to anyone. After reading them, one can then transition easily to sharing Estelle Isaacson's work and Judith von Halle's work. For me, Lorna's books are a kind of primer to Estelle's and Judith's works. Truly, Lorna Byrne is one of the great ones living on the Earth in our times; she is extremely humble. Also, she is desirous to take on others' pain and suffering. She is a "true spirit," one who models unconditional love.



Here is a YouTube link to a conversation with Lorna:

youtube.com/watch?v=ei-KzsRArNA&t=49s

The Metamorphosis of Plants

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

translated by C. Lawrie, 2017

You are bewildered, Beloved, by the myriad mix
Of this riot of flowers, in which the garden abounds;
Many a name you hear: one after other displaces
Each other with barbarous sound in your ear.
All the forms are akin, yet none is the same as the other;
And so the whole choir points to a hidden law,
A sacred riddle. Beloved friends, O that I were
Happily granted to voice for you the word of solution!
Come now, consider, how step by step, the plant
Gradually fashions itself into blossom and fruit...
Forth from the seed develops itself, as soon as the earth's
Quietly fertile womb lets it spring into life,
And to the holy, eternally mobile touch of the light
Entrusts its germinal leaves like the gentlest construction.
Primitive rested the power in the seed; an early prefiguring
Lay, enclosed in itself, under the seed-coat curling,
Leaf, and root, and germ, only semi-formed, without colour;
Thus, in dryness, the kernel conserves life quietly,
Sprouts up, aspiring, to gentle moisture entrusting,
And raises itself alike from the dark surrounding.
Primal yet remains the shape of the first appearance,
Betokening so, among plant-forms also, the child.
An impulse follows thereon, uplifting itself, that renews
Node upon node built up, always the primary form.
Not though exactly alike, for multifarious shapes it
Now, as you see, every subsequent leaf: more extended,
Serrated, divided in points and parts; once growing
Together below, while at rest in the underneath organ.
So does it first achieve its highest destined perfection
Which via many a species moves you into wonder.
Many-ribbed and crenated, with exuberant swelling surface,
The fullness of impulse free and unlimited seems.
But here, with powerful hands, Nature holds the formation
Back, and tends it gently to even greater perfection.
She moderates flow of the sap, narrowing the vessels;
At once more delicate workings are shown by the form.
Quietly the drive withdraws from the striving extremities.
The rib of the leafstalk builds itself more fully up.



Leafless and swift, though, ascends the more delicate stem,
And the one who is watching beholds a wonder-formation.
Round in a ring arrange now, numbered and numberless,
The tinier leaves alongside those they resemble.
Around the axis indrawn, unsheathes the sheltering calyx,
To liberate the highest form: of coloured corolla.
Nature displays herself in higher, fuller revealing,
Shows how she orders her limbs, step-wise, in a ladder.
Ever astonished you are, as soon as the flower on its stalk
Waves above the slender framework of varying leaves.
The glory, however, is herald of new creation.
Aye, the colour-petal feels touch of heavenly hand,
Is quick to re-concentrate: the most delicate forms
Twofold strive forth; they are destined for union.
Intimate, side by side, the holy couple stand together,
Taking their places in order around the sacred altar.
Hymen wings over, and glorious perfumes, potent
Pour sweet aroma around, enlivening all.
Now swell at once innumerable single seeds
Wrapped sweet in the motherly womb of the swelling fruits.
And here Nature closes the ring of eternal forces;
Though a new one links to the one that has gone before,
So that the cycle through all times preserves its chain,
And the Whole be enlivened, just as the single part.
Now, my Beloved, direct your gaze on the colourful throng
Which no longer moves before you, bewildering medley.
Every plant tells you now of the timeless laws,
Every flower speaks louder and plainer with you.
Should you decipher here the Goddess's sacred letters,
You see them then everywhere, in other conditions also...
Caterpillar creeping cautious, butterfly busy and quick,
Man himself shall alter the form of his destined shape.
O, think then also, how from the seed of acquaintance,
Cherished familiarity by and by springs up,
Friendship unveils itself within us with power,
And how Love at last gives birth to blossoms and fruit.
Think how variegated the forms, now this, now that,
Nature, quietly unfolding, has loaned for our feelings!
Feel joy also today! For love that is holy strives
Up to the highest fruit of like-minded thinking,
Kindred viewing of things, that therewith in harmonious insight
The pair unite together, discover the higher world.





Rugosa Rose
Barbara Bancroft



Starlight, the journal of the Sophia Foundation, appears twice a year, usually around Easter/Pentecost and Advent/Christmas. If you are intending to send a contribution to the next issue, please do so by March 1, 2018. Now that the journal is in an online version, it is possible to include numerous images, photos, etc. accompanying the text of articles and other contributions to *Starlight*. Let us know what you think about the online version of the journal and whether you have any suggestions for it.



