

The Being of Christmas  
Unrevised lectures by *Willi Sucher*  
Rudolf Steiner Hall, 30 December 1955

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe one can well say that the awareness of the picture of Christmas has grown enormously during the last few decades. Even the traditional Christmas cards have changed in some way, and one sees now in the cards, copies of the ancient pictures of the medieval painters concerning the Madonna and Child. I believe, therefore, it is justified to contemplate this universal picture of the Madonna and the Child, which we want to do tonight.

There are, of course, some obstacles in modern Christianity that do not allow the reality of the Christmas event, of the great vision of Christmas, to come to a full reality. I believe that is primarily because of the uncertainty about the historicity of the birth of Jesus, which has been in a sense created by modern historic research and also theology. The traditional date of December 25<sup>th</sup> was introduced during the first few centuries of Christianity, and nowadays one is not quite certain whether that traditional date of 25 December was really the date of the birth of Jesus, of whom we hear in the Gospel of St. Luke.

There are opinions that more or less say that those days, which we now call the 12 Holy Nights, coincided in ancient times with certain heathen festivals that concerned the rising of the Sun. Sun Mysteries were somehow connected with those ancient festivals, and one sometimes hears the opinion that early Christianity took over, or tried to take over, those festivals and revise them by the Mystery, the picture or vision of the birth of Jesus.

Now, those Sun Mysteries, the rising of the Sun, which are something tremendous through the course of the year, played a great part in the life of those living in ancient times. In the course of the year we see the Sun rising; starting from 21 December onward, we see the Sun's arc rising higher and getting higher and bigger until we come then to a time in Midsummer, when we see the Sun at its highest point in the sky. Then after 23 June, the Sun descends again; the daily "mark" of the Sun becomes ever smaller, and by the about 21 December the Sun has again reached its lowest point. Thus in the course of the year, this moment when the Sun was rising again and indicating that life and warmth and light were returning—which was a hope that the prevailing darkness of the wintry days would be overcome one day—was of enormous importance and significance for ancient people. Therefore, those days when the first signs were seen that the Sun was actually rising, starting about 25 December, those 12 days were considered to be a most significant time in the course of the year.

We are speaking here from the viewpoint of anthroposophical research with regard to certain spiritual facts concerning humanity and the evolution of the world. From this point of view, we cannot but see in the Christ Events, which took place about 2,000 years ago, Events that concern the whole evolution of this planet in the deepest sense. We can also imagine—it should not be too difficult to accept—the fact that all those Events, standing in the center of the entire evolution of our planet, were coordinated with regard to the cosmic events. This is a fact that has been worked out by the science of the spirit, which has indeed confirmed that those Events, taking place 2,000 years ago, were in complete conformity with the events in the cosmos. I hope I shall later have an opportunity to explain why this was so. Thus we can well imagine that the birth of Jesus did actually take place—at least that birth of which we hear in the Gospel of St. Luke—during that time. This means that the birth of that new Hope in humanity, of that concentrated Hope with regard to the future of our planet, actually took place in conformity with that great symbol in the sky, that of the rising Sun—the Sun in the course of the year rising up against the darkness to its summer heights. However, there is also another aspect, which we shall also have to talk about.

First of all, we celebrate Christmas every year in remembrance of the day of the birth of Jesus. Of course, this has become more or less a tradition. If one only takes the birth of Jesus on the traditional day of December 25<sup>th</sup>, as a kind of an adopted date and not the true date, of which we cannot know, then this yearly event stands on a weak footing. However, if we can accept that the Events which took place 2,000 years ago were in

conformity with the cosmic events, then our celebration of Christmas has a much deeper meaning. Moreover, every year it would again coincide with that great cosmic symbol of the rising Sun.

Now, there is more to it. Why do we celebrate Christmas as an Event which concerns more than just that very night from 24-25 December? Why do we include a time interval of 12 days, or rather, as we are accustomed to saying, 12 nights in the celebration of this festival? The concept of 12 nights is quite logical if you think that we often speak, when it comes to time intervals, not of days but of nights. We speak, for instance, of a fortnight; or, in some Christmas Plays we hear of a sennight, which is seven nights—not seven days or 12 days or fourteen days, but we speak of a sennight or a fortnight. Thus it is an element of the night that counts. Why then do we celebrate 12 days? Are those 12 days so very important? Here again, in this connection, we can again revive the experience and the significance of those 12 days in our time out of spiritual knowledge. It is a Sun Mystery again. Just as we have in the moment of the rising Sun, after its lowest point in the course of the year, we also have a Sun Mystery hidden behind the concept in those 12 days, behind the picture of those 12 days.

Let us imagine the Sun being out in the cosmos and shining out into cosmic space. Here we have the Earth on which we live. Also we know that nearest to the Earth is our companion the Moon, which travels around the Earth. The Moon, as well as the Earth, has a certain relationship to the Sun. As a matter of fact, if one investigates the nature of the Sun on the foundation of a science of the spirit, one comes to quite different conceptions with regard to the Sun. One comes to a picture, really, of a Sun as being the central entity in our solar universe, that which maintains our universe and even that which created the whole solar universe. In our time, long after the solar universe had come into existence, this very Sun still maintains that solar universe, enlivens it and makes it work and function, in a sense.

The Moon is traveling around the Earth, and we know that at certain times this Moon enters a quite definite, a quite specific relationship to the Sun, and that is the time of Full Moon. In times of Full Moon we have the full reflection, as we say, of the Sun's light, which the Moon receives on its surface. Now it is a fact that this happens within a certain rhythm, and that rhythm is about 29.5 days—it is between 29 and 30 days, which is, of course, the month. The concept of the month in our calendar is derived from the Moon. Month really means the interval of a Moon—that is, from Full Moon to Full Moon.

If we take the time very exactly, by observing the Full Moons in the course of the year, we will come to the conclusion that there are 12 Full Moons in one year. Sometimes under very specific circumstances it is possible that there are thirteen Full Moons in one year, but that is exceptional. If we take the rhythm of the Moon—29.5 days—and multiply that by 12, we come to a time of 354 days. Thus we have in the course of one year 12 Full Moons, and they group themselves around the Earth in such a fashion that we have a kind of progression. Thereby, we come to 12 Full Moons in the course of one year. However, as we can see, there is something left over. The time interval of 354 days does not cover the whole year, because we know very well that the year contains 365 days—actually 365 and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a day. This  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a day is then added up in 4 years to produce one full leap day. We then have a leap year every fourth year in our calendar, leaving a time left over of 11 to 12 days.

Now during the course of one year, as we know, everything is in movement. In order to show this movement exactly, I would have to move the Earth and I would also have to move the Sun; and only then could we see that there is a constant movement of that Full Moon cycle during the course of the year. The Sun is moving too; well, as we say, it is apparently moving around the Earth. We have learned in school that it is the Earth which moves around the Sun, but this need not to concern us so much now. The Sun is apparently moving around the Earth, just as those Full Moons are moving around the Earth; only, the Sun would be much further away. Therefore, in 365.25 days the Sun would return exactly to the same fixed star where it was one year earlier. If we could see the Sun after 365 days, we would see the Sun near that same fixed star where we saw it the year before. Thus we have this surplus of 11 to 12 days beyond the 354 days of the 12 Moon months.

This surplus is contained in the fact of the 12 Holy Nights. The 12 Holy Nights are, so to speak, that Sun surplus over the Moon year, which is clearly not just done at random. As a matter of fact, in ancient times you find that people arranged their calendar according to the Moon cycle. Why? Well first of all, they could observe the Full Moon and could see when Full Moon took place. It was an event in the cosmos that they could observe and according to which they could arrange their calendar. That was something that visibly took place. It would

have been much more difficult for them to find out the moment in which the Sun returns to the same fixed star. Therefore, the Moon year was much handier; but, you see, there was the trouble of that Moon year of the 12 Full Moons making a year of only 354 days, and this did not fit into the year of the seasons.

In those cultures whose years were calculated by the Moon year, which we find, for instance, in the ancient Hebrew calendar and also in many other calendars of eastern origin, there was always the difference of 11 to 12 days. Thus they had to insert a whole leap month every two or three years, as is done even today in the Jewish calendar and also other calendars. Now why is this so important? What can we see in this event of the 12 Holy Nights that takes place every year and which also concerns us? Why should we think that this yearly event is of such great importance with regard to the celebration of Christmas? If we take Christmas not only as an event of commemoration (which, of it is, course) but as an event that takes place, above all, in the human soul, then we must somehow create a proper concept of this difference between Moon-year and Sun-year.

The Moon—and this can be verified in several ways—is a body, an entity in the cosmos that works into the Earth; there is no doubt about that. That can be investigated and confirmed. The Moon, working into the Earth, works mainly into the direction of all that which concerns necessity on our planet; for instance growth, such as plant growth, and many other things are also connected with this working of the Moon in the sphere of the Earth. In the Moon we can see a vehicle of cosmic forces that work in the direction of “necessity” and also work, in a sense, in the direction of what we even call destiny. The “necessity” is that which we just cannot circumnavigate while we have to live in a body on the Earth.

The Sun is a vehicle of quite different forces. Again I ought to say that it can be proven very well by the means, which have been given by the science of the spirit, that the forces which use the Sun as their vehicle of operation work much more in the direction of spiritual freedom. The Sun: Well, you can imagine a very hot summer day, not just at our latitude but go more to the south, say to the equator, and imagine that the Sun would be shining brightly all day, every day. What would happen? Physical life would be destroyed. That actually does happen in parts of the Earth near the equator. What is at work here? At work is an element that, in the extreme, demonstrates what the Sun would do if the Sun alone were operating in the cosmos. It would externally dissolve all that which is bound to physical, material existence. From an external point, plants would die, human beings could not live, and animals might die out. We are witnessing an element that, by itself, would eliminate earthly incorporation; that is, the very act of being lowered into the grave of physical, material existence and into everything earthly that would bring forth spiritual worth, which is only brought about by the balance between Sun and Moon.

This is only an extreme example. The Sun works upon the Earth, and those forces that use the Sun as the vehicle of their operation work all the time, even if the Sun is not shining, even if it is below the horizon. Even then the Sun is working, because the Earth as an integrated organism receives the impact of the Sun from the other side. All the time the Sun is working upon the Earth, and it works in the direction of the creation of freedom, of the bringing forth of spiritual freedom. It is only that activity of the Sun forces, which is counterbalanced by the element that comes from the Moon, that always tends to bury life and existence in material existence. Thus there is a perfect balance established in the cosmos, which varies according to the phases of the Moon and also according to the position of the Sun. The relative position of the Sun varies, but nevertheless there is a kind of balance established between the two: Moon and Sun. Only during Christmas time, when the Moon year has come to an end and the next Full Moon has to be counted into the next year, does the Moon “drop out”, so to speak, of that year. Then the Sun forces, through the natural and cosmic overlay, predominate for 11 to 12 days. Then we have a pure working of the Sun into the element of the Earth. It is during this time, during those 12 Holy Nights, that we can really experience a moment in the year during which there can awaken in ourselves if we prepare ourselves—if, for instance, we take that Advent time of preparation as a reality and prepare ourselves properly. We can then really experience an element in the Earth that can help us to experience, to realize, a spiritual Sun. We might experience something that can guide us, something that can give us a platform on which to stand, or can indicate a door, a road toward the realization of spiritual freedom. Thus Christmas is not only an event that wants to refer us back to the past, to what has been, to what perhaps took place about 2,000 years ago. Instead, it is an event that can be ever renewed and can become a real experience in our soul. If we prepare ourselves and if we take precautions that our inner soul life is not too much

compressed by the impacts of civilization, surrounding us in the present age, in an almost terrifying fashion.

In a cosmic sense, we can actually see in all this, again, the picture of that great simple vision of the Madonna and Child: the picture that reached its culmination, as far as pictorial representation is concerned, in the Sistine Madonna by Raphael Santi. In all this that we have been discussing until now, there is hidden the secret of the Madonna and the Child, although it may not have been apparent.

What is it that we have here in the Moon forces?—In all that which is needed in Earth existence? We could not live on this planet without the Moon. Without the Moon there wouldn't be any life; there wouldn't even be any water on this planet, in which case there cannot be any life on the Earth. We so very often speak of the Moon as a cosmic cinder, something which is completely dry, a complete desert, and that vegetation growth is not possible on that planet. Surely that is so, but just in this very fact—that the Moon appears there in the cosmos as a tremendous cinder, as a tremendous desert—there lies the tremendous sacrifice which those forces have performed who are connected with the Moon, who use the Moon as their vehicle. They have sacrificed everything that is connected with water, with the liquid element, with the fluid element on the Earth; and therefore the Moon can work all the more into that which it had given away, which it had left behind, even, on the Earth. Thus the Moon is an element of fructification, as far as our Earth is concerned, an element of constantly enlivening ether. If we take the path of the orbit of the Moon around the Earth as a reality, then we would find in that space which surrounds the Earth, the blue sky. And in that blue sky you find something like the gentle mantle of forces which are akin, in a cosmic sense, to that which you see in such a picture as that of the blue mantle in the Sistine Madonna. This we need, for there couldn't be any life on the Earth if we didn't have that Moon element. Therefore it is a Motherly element, in a sense, that gives all Earth existence a possibility to live, to come into existence, and to grow in the course of the year. In all that we have through the Moon, there is also a Motherly element, in the truest sense, contained in the forces of the Moon.

And what of the Sun? As I said before, in the Sun we have an element that leads us to another principle in the cosmos, which is opposed, or seems to be opposed to that which is the element contained in the Moon. The Sun wants to lead us to spiritual freedom, and connected with that Being of the Sun (there are of course great mysteries connected with the Sun, but I don't think we can enumerate them all tonight) are forces that want to guide the universe toward spiritual freedom, toward what is actually the overcoming of death through the dissolution of matter. In an external sense, there would be decay; for instance, if the Sun forces would work alone, there would be something like a shrinking process. However, the other side, in a spiritual sense, is that we have the possibility of spiritual birth, of rising out of the prison of material existence, and that is done by the Sun and those forces which use the Sun as their vehicle. Thus we can see that as much as in the Moon is contained that Motherly element of preserving life, of creating life, of bringing that sprouting force about the time of the spring Full Moon (because it is always the Full Moon that is connected with the sprouting life on the Earth), so there is as much of the dissolving element in the spiritual element of the Sun. It is not so much what we call the Sun out there in the sky but what stands as spirit forces behind that entity in the cosmos. There we have an element that will to lead us to spiritual freedom, to a birth in the spirit. Thus we can again find from a different direction that which is the Child, namely, the Child of Hope, the Hope of evolution, of the progressive future of that which we ultimately find in the Christ impulse.

Thus every year, because there is justification from the cosmic facts, there is a necessity to celebrate that time when the Moon forces are stepping into the background and where the Sun forces can work unhindered in the cosmos. It is a time in the year when we can really celebrate the birth of that new impulse of spiritual freedom, the Christ impulse, where we can celebrate the birth of that impulse and make it a reality even in daily life, coming right down to practical facts. I believe that for the future of human civilization, very much will depend on a realization of these facts that are connected with the seasons of the year, as for instance Christmas. Very much will depend on a realization of those facts, because we need that orientation, we need that inner experience, that awareness of what takes place with regard to the whole organism of the Earth and with regard to the cosmos which surrounds us.

However, there is also a third aspect, a great cosmic aspect that can bring us near the reality of the connection between the Mother and the Child, near that great vision presented to humanity by the Medieval painters. This third aspect is the relationship between what one might call, in a cosmic sense, the relationship

between Sophia and the Christ. This is something for which we have a tremendous need in our time. Christianity, as far as it rests on the pillars of tradition and chiefly on the pillars of that tradition contained in the Gospels, has entered a tremendous crisis. The very supports of Christianity seem to be crumbling. We can visit many places and nations all over the Earth, and we will find everywhere the same picture: Christian humanity has gradually lost the understanding of the content of the Gospels. The development of modern natural science has greatly impacted modern humanity's understanding, even our approach to what is contained in the Gospels. Think of the Gospel of St. John where it speaks of the seven great Deeds, the Seven Signs. Who can accept, on a scientific foundation, such a thing as one of the Seven Signs—say for instance the Feeding of the Five Thousand or the Raising of Lazarus or any of the other Seven Signs? Who can accept this? Christian humanity is in a deplorable position. It can only accept in blind faith what is presented in the Gospels, and only if it completely ignores everything coming in from the angle of materialism in modern consciousness, such as the facts which modern natural science has discovered. The questions are, “How is this to go on? Can we find any solution, or is Christianity doomed to vanish out of this world?” I believe we must find new foundations for an understanding for that which is contained in the Gospels; and here again I ought to say that the science of the spirit, or anthroposophy, can give a strong foundation for an understanding of the events that are described in the Gospels. Furthermore, I should like to speak today of something else that is actually connected with this, and that is the relationship of Sophia, or Isis as she was called in ancient times, to the Christ.

We find in Egypt—actually in late Egypt—the vision, the picture of the Madonna with the Child. There exist statues that show the Goddess Isis with the Boy, the baby Horus, on her lap. We can ask, “How is such a thing possible? What does it mean that these things exist in times long before the Events in Palestine actually took place?” On the foundation of spiritual science, I may perhaps say, in the moment, that those pictures in pre-Christian times are actually a kind of pre-vision of the things to come. Why is that so? Isis, the ancient Goddess of Egyptian mythology, was also called the Queen of Heaven; and, of course, in various nations she had different names. You see in ancient representations, for instance, the Goddess spanning the sky. She is standing at one end of the world—the world is imagined, of course, as something like a flat disc. She stands at one end of the world and reaches to the other end. She bends over the Earth, and her body carries the stars. She is actually the Being, the Soul-Being of the stars, that which lives behind the stars.

Then there came the time when the ancient mysteries—all that great and wonderful wisdom in ancient times, of which we now have but little knowledge—came to an end. The time approached when humanity gradually lost of all of that instinctive connection and contact with the divine spiritual-world. Thus also the knowledge of the Divine Isis of the divine world was lost. This loss was actually humanity's loss, as Gods can never die; therefore, we must realize that Isis never died. It was something in humanity's heart that died, making the heart incapable of reaching out to Isis, of having a true inner experience of the being of Isis. This was compressed, as it were, into the legend of Osiris, which you may know.

There is also a legend of the death of Isis. She was killed by an opponent of normal evolution, whom nowadays we call Lucifer. Lucifer killed Isis. Her husband, Osiris, was killed earlier, and Osiris was lowered into the Grave of the Earth—actually his body was cut up, and the pieces were buried all over the Earth. Isis was also killed, but by Lucifer, and She was put into the Grave of the Heavens. Now we must learn to understand this wonderful legend. What does it want to tell us? It wants to tell us that there is a Being, there is a power working in the Earth—in the soul of humanity—that wants to permit us to use our senses to see only what is visible. For instance, the visible Sun, the visible stars, everything that appears to us which we can perceive through our senses. That power of Lucifer wants to make or form our constitution into a constitution that is directed only toward what appears to us as the visible world.

Thus this legend speaks of a tendency in us that is directed toward the senses and only toward the world of the senses. That force would of course kill something in us, it would eliminate something of which ancient humanity was instinctively aware, and that is the fact that behind the visible there are invisible spiritual-forces. There are spiritual forces and spiritual beings at work, who in the first place created the cosmic world, that world of the stars, and those who direct it. Therefore, Lucifer tried and even succeeded, to a certain extent, to kill something in us that was originally able to perceive the Being of Isis behind the world of the visible stars. Look around: we have a modern astronomy, we have stored up tremendous knowledge about the cosmic world,

we have come to fantastic conclusions with regard to the size of the Universe, we have calculated their distances, we have measured them, and we have even tried to weigh them. We have treated the entire cosmos in modern astronomy as a machine and nothing but a machine. There is no longer any life in this cosmos. There has been a tendency at work in humanity, which has created step by step and very slowly, a one-sided capacity that was certainly highly cultivated but directed only toward that which could be seen.

Imagine, for one moment, all that has been done and all that has been achieved in modern astronomy has been built solely on the sense of sight. You know that one speaks generally of five senses—spiritual science even speaks of 12 senses—and out of all that cosmos of senses, we have singled out for the basis of our information in astronomy that one sense: the sense of sight. Certainly the modern astronomer would ask, “What else could we do?” But we have singled out the sense of sight and have made that the sole onlooker in the world of the stars. Thus Isis was killed; but then, Gods can never die, they can only die in human consciousness, and that is what has happened. What we need is a re-awakening of those forces.

*Sistine Madonna 1513-14*

As I said before, Isis was experienced in ancient times as something like a motherly force in the cosmos. People in ancient times realized that they were born out of the totality of the cosmos, and the modern science of the spirit, in all reality and working with means that can prove these facts, has found again this truth: that we are born out of the totality of the cosmos. Actually, everything existing on this planet: mineral, plant, animal, human beings, with regard to the spiritual forces, and the spiritual elements working in matter, come from the cosmos, they come from the world of the stars. So you see, Isis has not died, she is still giving birth to everything existing on this planet; it is only we who must learn to recognize and to experience her again. If we do this, then we can find a much greater picture: we can find the glorification of such a picture that was painted by Raphael.



Then we can find that the great cosmos in which we live, the world of the stars, is really giving us the existence that we need on our planet. It is a Moon element, but in a kind of cosmic-expanded and magnified fashion. We receive this existence on our Earth planet in order to develop our spiritual faculties: everything contained in our soul life and in the capacities that we can develop in the course of our sojourn on this planet. Think of all humanity’s cultural achievements, including technological achievements. Taking everything together, it speaks a majestic language of those capacities that are hidden in the human being, and what has been achieved is only a particle of what is hidden in us as capacities, as faculties that we can develop and by which we can elevate existence to heights of which we mostly cannot even imagine today. So there we have again the great picture of being born as humanity, as members of the planet Earth being born out of the great cosmic Mother that is the world of the stars. That is only one side. We must also recognize the fact that we receive this existence in order to manifest what is hidden in our being as our capacities and faculties. This can be realized in every sense. I said that modern Christianity is in a very difficult position, that the ancient documents are mostly destroyed.

We should take the picture of the Mother and Child very seriously in a real cosmic sense. We can do that; it can be done. There is, of course, no time today to go into great detail, but there is one possibility, there are even many possibilities. During those three years of the ministry of Christ, the final and decisive three years after the Baptism in the river Jordan, the Christ walked on this planet and performed the deeds of which we hear in the Gospels. He spoke the words of which we hear; meanwhile out there in the cosmos, the cosmic entities—the planets, the Sun—moved in their courses.

There is an inner relationship between what took place on the Earth 2,000 years ago and that which took place in the cosmos at the same time. If we would study the courses of the celestial entities during those three years, we would find something like a reflection, like a mirror, and we would behold what took place on the Earth. Why is that so? Why can we speak of this? Well, who was the Christ? That is one of the things that a modern Christianity cannot easily understand. Who was the Christ? Theology, chiefly of the last century and the beginning of this century, came to the conclusion that Christ was a simple human being, the simple man of

Nazareth, nothing special. Then other religions from the East asked, “Why should we accept this simple person? There are others: prophets and Buddha and others, why should they not also be the chosen and why should they also not be guiding lights in humanity?” In this was revealed the fact that modern Christianity could not understand the nature of Christ. In spiritual science, anthroposophy speaks of the Christ Being as having come from the cosmos, actually having descended from the Sun. Christ was the guide in pre-Christian times, the Creator of that Sun, in a sense, that we see out there in the cosmos. Thus He was the Creator of the whole solar universe in which we live.

All this can be worked out in a strict philosophical sense and also even in a mathematical sense, if one investigates the properties of the Sun. The Christ descended from that Sun down to the Earth. If Christ was the Guiding Spirit of that Sun, which was the vehicle of creation and that still is the vehicle for maintaining the whole solar system and of enlightening the solar system, then there must be in the Christ, a Being Who is the Spirit of the whole universe in which we live; and as such, He descended to the Earth. Therefore, during those three years while Christ walked on the Earth, His Court, if you allow me this expression (there is actually a Celtic prayer that speaks of the Court of Christ as being the Stars, which is His mantle and which was His garment in pre-Christian times, when He was not yet born on the Earth, when He still dwelt in the womb of the great cosmic Mother, the Madonna), this Court of Christ arranged itself around all that the Christ did on the Earth. It was certainly not that any of the deeds of Christ were determined by what took place in the cosmos. No, it was rather that the cosmos followed like the court of a King would follow the motions, the wishes, and the requests of a King. Thus we have in the cosmos out there in that blue mantle of the Divine Sophia—Divine Isis in an ancient sense—the element of the great Mother, and on Earth we have those deeds taking place inaugurated by the Christ.

If we can read and re-awaken a knowledge or a wisdom of that which is behind or is revealed in the movements of the stars out there, then we will have a light of wisdom. Actually Sophia is also called the Divine Wisdom in the Eastern Churches. It was always known that Isis was the Divine Wisdom of the stars. If we re-awaken our capacity to read, to experience, and to become aware of that which worked as divine wisdom behind the movements of the stars during the three years of the ministry of Christ, then we have something within us like a Light of Wisdom that can shine onto everything that took place 2,000 years ago.

Here on the Earth we have something that has come down to us through tradition in what is contained in the Gospels. Christian humanity, as a whole, has lost the approach to that or is losing it fast today. What we need is a Light of Wisdom that again sheds light, but from quite a different direction onto what took place 2,000 years ago. We need, in a sense, not so much the Christ, because He has united with the Earth, but what we need now is the Wisdom that is ultimately to be found in the understanding of the movements, the rhythms, and the gestures of the stars as an external expression of the Divine Sophia; if we have that, then light can fall on the Being of Christ.

For instance, if we had time to study the Being of the Sun—everything we can even reconcile, in a sense, with what modern astronomy has found with regard to the Sun—and work out what the Being of the Sun is, we would find light to shed on that great question: Who is the Christ and how is the Christ united with the Earth since the Mystery of Golgotha? If we would take the events in the starry cosmos during those three years of the ministry of Christ, if we would follow the gestures of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and would read in them the life or the expression of the cosmos (just as we may have read in the expression of a human countenance the inner life of that human being), if we would read in the external movements and gestures of the planets the inner life of the Divine Sophia, who was killed in pre-Christian times by Lucifer (through that element which wanted to bring everything in us down to a materialistic level), if we could read those movements and those gestures of the planets during those three years, we would again learn to understand what took place 2,000 years ago. Thus we would then have magnified to cosmic dimensions the picture of the Madonna and the Child in a fashion that would, perhaps, not only have an appeal to a kind of sentimental awareness and experience of the fact of Christmas, but which could be fully reconciled with all that lives in us as the striving, as the yearning for a knowledge of these things. Not only need the picture of the Madonna and the Child be something that appeals to the feeling of the human being, to that which certainly and justifiably may bring warmth and inner light to a human soul at the time of Christmas, but this great picture, this great vision of the Madonna and the Child could

be elevated to the level where that which can be represented by artistic means can be fully reconciled, and not only reconciled but verified by what we can find on a scientific level.

This is the message that I believe ought to sound into a modern humanity, especially modern Christian humanity. Such a seemingly simple picture, as that of the Christmas vision, need not be something merely to be pushed into one corner of human existence by the impact of modern civilization, only to be fetched out of that corner and used as a kind of refreshing and warming-up of the feelings of human beings for a few days. Rather, this great vision can stand right in the midst of human existence, even of a modern human existence that is so concerned with technology, with modern natural science and so on. It can be done; and of this, I believe, we have to speak on this occasion and on the foundation of anthroposophical spiritual science.