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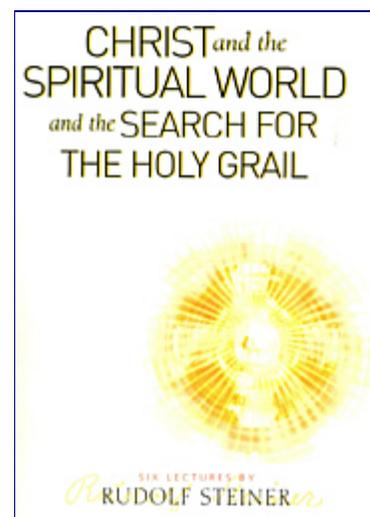
A READER'S JOURNAL

**Christ and the Spiritual World and
the Search for The Holy Grail, GA#149
6 Lectures in Leipzig, Dec. 1913 to Jan.
1914**

by
Rudolf Steiner

ARJ2 Chapter: Spiritual Science
Published by Published by Rudolf Steiner
Press/UK in 2008

A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2017



How did people around the time of Mystery of Golgotha understand the Christ Being? What were the four sacrifices of Christ? How are we to understand the Sybils? These are the questions to which Steiner undertakes to give us answers, ones we can understand in the corresponding first three lectures, but only with great study.

Something happened to human consciousness during the 350 year period in the middle of which the Mystery of Golgotha occurred. People sought to understand the secrets and riddles of the world in a new way, a way which came down from the Greek culture as intellectual form of understanding. But the new keys of intellectual thought did not open the locks to the secrets of existence. We learned a lot about nature, mathematics, and physical things, but the riddles of life remained a deep mystery with which intellectual thinkers struggled mightily.

[page 12] For we then come to recognize that the struggle was in vain; that the Mystery of Golgotha appeared to human understanding as though it were dispersed through far-distant spiritual worlds and would not unveil itself.

One needs to raise oneself above two spiritual worlds, the Astral and lower Devachanic, into the Higher Devachanic to experience what penetrates our physical world from the Mystery of Golgotha. It does us no good to pore deeply into the writings of others expressing their ideas and thoughts about this great mystery of existence. Only in that highest world can one find the "fountain-head", "the life of thought". (Page 16)

[page 16, 17] For clairvoyant souls in our time it could be a powerful experience to immerse themselves, alone with their thinking, in the time when thought underwent its deepening; to shut out everything else, including knowledge of the Mystery of Golgotha, and to reflect how the thought-content on which we still nourish ourselves came forth in the Greco-Roman world.

Then one should turn one's gaze to other worlds and feel rising over the Devachanic world a star that belongs to a higher spiritual world; the star from which rays out the power that makes itself felt in the thought-world of Greco-Roman antiquity. Then one feels oneself here on Earth, but carried away from the world of to-day and plunged into the Greco-Roman world, with its influence spreading out over other regions at that time,

before the Mystery of Golgotha. But as soon as one lets the spiritual world make its impression on one, there appears again, shining over Devachan, the star (I speak symbolically), or the spiritual Being of whom one says to oneself: yes, the experience of the isolation of thought, and of the possibility of thought having undergone such a deepening at the beginning of our era — this is a consequence of the rays that shine out from this star in the higher spiritual world.

The star he refers to is the Christ Being. It was the appearance of this star shining from the third spiritual world that inspired the spiritual giants of the time to create a system of knowledge known today as Gnosis, which means a "direct knowledge". Unfortunately Gnosis was considered heretical by the early church fathers and their texts were expunged or cleansed⁽¹⁾ in all the extant writings at the time. Learning about Gnosis from writings today is fraught with problems. Steiner was often accused of bringing a weak form of Gnosis in his spiritual science. But Steiner does not rely on any of these texts. He does recognize that the Gnostics understood the point he was making about the great spiritual Being.

Following the Gnostics' time, a materialistic nature infused the thoughts of writers who came up with various explanations, such as: the beginning of our cosmos was a condensation of some diffuse nebula.⁽²⁾ These thoughts and ideas filled Gnostic writings and led them far astray from any objective reality. Steiner needed to explain this to make this next statement.

[page 18] Above all we can say that the Gnostics had a feeling for what I have just described; that for the causes of what happened in that past epoch one must look to worlds lying infinitely far away in the background. This awareness was passed onto others, and if we are not superficial we can, if we will, see it glimmering through what we may call the theology of Paul, and in many other manifestations also.

This devolution of the Gnostic texts has turned the Gnostic world of spirit-first upside-down into a material-first reality. One can not understand Gnosis from most of the extant texts.

[page 19, 20] That is why it is so difficult to enter into the thoughts of the Gnosis. For what the Gnosis places at the beginning of the world carries no suggestion of anything at all material. Anyone thoroughly attuned to modern education will perhaps be unable to restrain a slight smile if he invited to think in the sense of the Gnosis that the world in which he finds himself, the world he explains so beautifully with his Darwinism, bears no relation to a true picture of how the world began.

This is an example of why, in reading Rudolf Steiner's works and lectures, you need to *know all about it* before you start!⁽³⁾ It's the only way to understand the "true picture of how the world began". To the Gnostics the world began as a divine Father and Silence which evolved into some thirty great Beings or Worlds called the "Aeon." Steiner makes it clear that he is not teaching Gnosis in this passage:

[page 21] We will disregard for a while what we have ourselves said about the world in the sense of the early twentieth century. What I am now telling you must not be taken as offering a convincing world-picture. In the anthroposophy of the twentieth century we have naturally to get beyond the Gnosis, but just now we want to sink ourselves into it.

How might a Gnostic respond to our Darwin type of evolution, based as it is on matter and energy?

[page 26] Yes, if a Gnostic, with his soul born out of the Gnosis, were to stand before you, he might also take the liberty of expressing his outlook, somewhat like this: "I understand very well how you have become so proud and arrogant, with your ideas of evolution and energy, but this is because your thinking has become so crude and simple and primitive that you are satisfied with your nebulae and your entirely abstract concepts. You say the words 'evolution' and 'energy' and think you have got something, but you are blind to the finer spiritual life that seeks its way up into that which rises

through thirty stages above anything you have."

No materialist scientists today would take kindly to their way of thinking being called, "crude, simple, and primitive", would they? But there was truth in Gnosis, even if it not useful to us today as anthroposophists, who accept that one occult experience, the star which shines through three levels of spiritual worlds to us.

[page 27] It is not my wish that you should treat our considerations to-day as offering an explanation of anything. The more you feel that what I have told you is not an explanation; the more you feel that I have put before you contradiction after contradiction and have shown you only one occult experience, the perception of the star, the better will you have understood me for to-day.

I would wish you to see clearly that at the beginning of our era there appeared in the world something which influenced human understanding and was yet far, far from being understood; I would like you to feel that the period at the beginning of our era was a giant riddle.

There it is: a giant riddle, an Unanswered Question, that Steiner leaves for us to ponder as we enter Lecture 2, in which he gives us an answer to the riddle of the Three Magi in the Matthew account of the birth of Jesus. Why were there three of them and what was the meaning of the three gifts they brought? If the holy Rishis of ancient India, the first cultural epoch, had to come to encounter the Logos, they would have brought an offering of frankincense, "symbolizing a recognition of the Divine that works in the realms of humanity." (Page 33) If a King of Zarathustra's time in old Persia, the second cultural epoch, had come to adore the arrival of the great Sun-spirit, they would have brought a gift of shining gold. And a Wise Man in Egypto-Chaldean time, the third cultural epoch, would have brought an offering of myrrh.

[page 33, 34] It would have been understood that a Star from spiritual heights had appeared and had been born in a human being. This divine-spiritual line of descent from spheres beyond the earthly would have been clearly grasped; and myrrh would have been brought as an offering. And if we enter into the souls of those who figure in the Bible as the three Magi, who come from the East and are the guardians of the treasures of wisdom derived from the three preceding culture-epochs, we find the Bible itself indicating that a certain understanding was present, since these three Magi do at least appear at the birth of the Jesus-child.

Does this not suggest that the Bible has encoded for us the reality of the three cultural epochs preceding the birth of Christ? Each of these three epochs had wise men who understood the reality of Christ, and yet Christ was to appear in human form during the fourth cultural epoch, the one *least* suited to understand His appearance.

[page 35] And when we look at all the attempts that were made in subsequent centuries to understand the nature of Christ Jesus, we find endless theological wrangling; and finally in the Middle Ages a sharp distinction is drawn between knowledge and faith — which implies a complete abandonment of any knowledge about the being of Christ Jesus . . . not to speak of modern times, which up to the present have remained powerless in face of this manifestation.

Steiner admits on page 36 to having much difficulty solving his giant riddle, but shares the role that the Sibyls played in his search. I had encountered the Sibyls once before in my studies of his work, in his lectures on [Approaching the Mystery of Golgotha](#). It was a Sibyl whose advice led to the defeat of Maxentius, allowing Constantine to conquer Rome. We hear the Sibyl influence in the *Dies Irae*, a famous hymn which translates to, "Day of Wrath, O Day which leads this World-Age into destruction, according to the witness of David and of the Sibyl." (From footnote on Page 38) These Sibyls were so well-known and respected that Michelangelo painted them among the great prophets of the Bible in Sistine Chapel.

Rome converted to Christianity after the Sibyl led Constantine to victory by the ambiguous message she gave Maxentius, "You will defeat the greatest enemy of Rome if you take your troops outside the walls." The greatest enemy was himself.

[page 38, 39] Only someone dominated by present-day rationalistic ideas can overlook the far-reaching influence of Sibyllism on the world in which Christianity grew up. As I have often said, the history we are given to read is in many respects a *fable convenue* (4), especially where anything of a spiritual nature is concerned. Until quite recent centuries the ideas of all classes of people were influenced much more widely than is generally believed by what came from the Sibyls. Sibyllism is a remarkable, enigmatic phenomenon, occurring as it did in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch.

Michelangelo certainly respected the influence of the Sibyls when he included so many of them in his Sistine paintings, carefully arranged between the Prophets as if each were of equal significance.

[page 39] We have indeed an important work of art which points to the traditions concerning the significance of Sibyllism. Perhaps we do not always look at this work with an awareness of its significance in this respect, but the significance exists and should give occasion for reflection. I mean the great paintings in the Sistine Chapel, where Michelangelo depicted not only the development of Earth and Humanity, but also the Prophets and the Sibyls. In looking at these paintings we ought to notice the way in which Michelangelo portrays the Sibyls, and particularly how he contrasts them with the Prophets.

The one of the Prophet Daniel shows a pose familiar to me: he is writing something with his right hand while holding open a book with his left hand. In my work of writing detailed reviews, especially of a Steiner text (as I am doing right now), I often write with my hands on a keyboard with the book I'm reviewing open at my left side.

[page 40] In this wonderful work of art we see first the portrayal of the Prophets — Zechariah, Joel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah, Jonah, and ranged with them are the Sibyls — the Persian, Delphic, Erythrean, Libyan and Cumaean Sibyls. Almost all the Prophets, we find, have to a greater or lesser degree something of the character which strikes us immediately in Jeremiah and comes out with particular significance in



Zechariah; they are deeply reflective men, for the most part absorbed in books or something similar, quietly taking into well-ordered minds whatever it is they are studying. In the countenances of

these Prophets we encounter the calmness of their souls. Daniel looks like a slight exception, but only an apparent one. He stands before a book which is supported on the back of a boy; he has in his hand something to write with, in order to write down in another book what he is reading. Here there is a slight effect of transition from reading the world-secrets to writing them down; while the other Prophets remain in meditation, calm and relaxed in soul, entirely devoted to the world-secrets. In gazing at them we see — and this must be kept firmly in mind — that they are all absorbed in super-earthly things; their souls are at rest in the spiritual and they are seeking to fathom the emergence of humanity from out of the spiritual.

Steiner seems particularly impressed with the Erythrean Sibyl. The image seems to portray someone doing the same work as Steiner did in his lifetime: bringing out of his soul forces a prophetic message.

[page 41] Then we turn to the Erythrean Sibyl; we see how she is

connected with everything that can accrue to man from the elemental secrets of the Earth. Above her head is a lamp; a naked boy is lighting the lamp with a torch. How could the Intention of the painting be more clearly expressed? Here is human passion kindling out of the unconscious soul-forces the message that is to be instilled with all the power of prophecy into mankind.

While the Prophets are portrayed in deep contemplation, the Sibyls are portrayed as tied to the moment and the elements of the Earth. Take the Delphic Sibyl as Steiner describes her, who represents the airy element of the Greek oracle.

[page 41, 42] The Prophets are devoted in their souls to the primal eternity of the spirit; the Sibyls are carried away by the earthly, in so



far as the earthly reveals the psychic-spiritual. The Delphic Sibyl shows this particularly clearly; we see how her hair is even blown to one side by a gust of wind, and the same wind catches her blue veil, so that she has the air element to thank for what she imparts. In this gust of wind we see pictured what the Earth wished to reveal through the lips of this Sibyl, with forcibly persuasive power.



How could the ancient Indian Rishis have understood the Christ Being? They had none of the thoughts and ideas of the later Greeks like Plato and Aristotle. It could only have come to them as inspirations via their astral bodies, essentially a gift from the spiritual world.

[page 43] Not as ideas that had been worked out, somewhat as the ideas of Plato and Aristotle were worked out, but as inspirations, as something that stood before them with the full power of concrete inspirations. Their astral bodies were laid hold of by that which streamed into them from the great Universe, and out of this working of the Cosmos on their astral bodies came the concepts which could have conjured up before their souls the Being of Christ Jesus.

Later in Plato's time, ideas and concepts came from the spiritual world through the medium of thoughts which were laid hold of and expounded via the Ego instead of the astral body. This new ability existed harmoniously alongside the older chaotic prophecies of the Sibyls which offered only warped views of the spiritual world. The Ego was waxing as a stronger influence and the astral body was waning.

[page 44] And so two quite different developments can be traced. On the one hand there was the world of concepts, let us say of Plato and Aristotle: a world of ideas which could be called the most attenuated form of the spiritual world, a world grasped and explored directly by the Ego and no longer experienced through the astral body.

So, as my old friend Bagley used to ask after some long discussion about software design, "What does all this mean?" It meant that humankind was being readied for the most significant event in the history of the

world, the Mystery of Golgotha, when the great Christ Being completed His journey and filled the Earth aura with His Spirit. Lacking this the Sibylline forces would have wreaked havoc upon humankind by maintaining their forces right up to the present time. This did not happen.

[page 46, 47] And if we ask why this has not happened, and who has brought it about that the force so apparent in the Sibyls has gradually declined, then we must answer: the Christ, who through the Mystery of Golgotha infused the Earth's aura with His Being; thus He destroyed the Sibylline force in the souls of men and has driven it away.

And so on the ground of Spiritual Science we observe the remarkable fact that men with their wisdom have not understood much about the Christ Impulse: their concepts and ideas have turned out to be virtually powerless in this respect. But the essential thing is not that the Christ Impulse came into the world primarily as a teaching. The essential thing is the character of the facts, the direct impulse that flowed from the Mystery of Golgotha. And this we must look for not only in what is taught or understood, but in what is accomplished for human souls. And one of these deeds, the struggle waged by Christ, who had permeated the Earth-aura, against Sibyllism — it is this deed that I wished to bring before you to-day.

Steiner includes Paul as a fifth writer of the Gospels, one who indicated how the Christ won the battle against the Sibyls. Even though Paul couldn't find the exact words to express what was going on with this battle, somehow his message came through between his words. Paul's words sounded out notes of the Prophets of old and the words of Sibyls spoken out from the elements of the Earth.

[page 48, 49] With Paul it always seems that there is much more between his words than one gets from simply reading them. It is as though the Damascus vision had come to expression through him; as though there penetrated into humanity through him a note which was opposed to the prophetic note of the Sibyls; as though through him there rang out again the note of the old Prophets whom Michelangelo has represented so beautifully in his paintings. As I have said, the Sibyls had something that came from the elementals of the Earth; something that could not have been there if the elemental spirits of the Earth had not spoken to them. With Paul there was something similar, something which external scholarship has noted in a remarkable but quite exoteric way; and this, if one examines it from the standpoint of Spiritual Science, really leaves one standing before a world of amazement.

One of amazing things about Paul was that the regions he traveled to and brought the message, the Good News of Christ, were all regions in which olive trees grew. I had encountered this observation elsewhere in Steiner, but here he offers an explanation for this otherwise strange situation. One must understand the power of elementals of the Earth and how it flowed as a good force through Paul.

[page 49] One can understand Paul quite well, if one wants to understand him only from the standpoint of ordinary rationalism. But if one wants to grasp what it was that lived spiritually in Paul, in and between his words, and why one feels through his words something akin to the prophecies of the Sibyls, but with him proceeding from a good element in Earth evolution, then one comes to the phenomenon which answers the question: How far does Paul's world extend? What are its boundaries? And the remarkable answer we receive is: Paul is great throughout the world where the olive tree is cultivated. I know I am saying something strange, but we shall see that this strangeness explains itself, in a certain sense, when tomorrow we enter a little into the character of Paul.

Steiner next talked about Paul in Lecture 4, a day later than he planned; instead, on the next day, he focused on the three sacrifices of Christ which preceded His ultimate sacrifice on the Cross. The best exposition of these sacrifices outside of Lecture 3 can be found in [Approaching the Mystery of Golgotha](#).

[GA#152](#) whose lectures are contemporary with, coming before and after, this lecture series [\(5\)](#). What this lecture reveals is that these sacrifices filled the spiritual Being who was later to become the Nathan Jesus-child.

The First Sacrifice moderated the human sensory system. The spiritual Being heard a cry of distress from the human sensory system, which was being beset by Lucifer and Ahriman, and unless this Being intervened, the human senses would have continually bounced from one extreme of bliss to intense pain without end; some moderation was needed and this Being provided it.

[page 56, 57] So it was that in the spiritual world the Being who later became the Nathan Jesus-child was permeated by the Christ Being, and then brought about a change in the cosmic forces which were streaming in to build up the human senses. These senses were changed in such a way that instead of being mere organs of sympathy and antipathy, they became organs that human beings could use, and so could look with wisdom at all the nuances of sense-perception. Very differently would the cosmic forces have flowed into mankind if this event, far back in the Lemurian Age, had not taken place in the spiritual worlds. This Being who appeared as the Nathan Jesus-child was then still living (if I may use the phrase) in the Sun-sphere, and because he listened to the human cry of distress, he experienced something which made it possible for him to be permeated by the very Spirit of the Sun, so that the activity of the Sun was modified in such a way that the human sense-organs, which derive essentially from solar activity, did not become organs of mere sympathy and antipathy.

The planetary forces worked on the vital organs of humankind without the direct influence of the Sun, and unabated, they would have created intense greed and loathing. The Second Sacrifice came from the Christ Being whose origin was the Sun and moderated these extreme behaviors in the vital organs by entering the Nathan Jesus-child Being.

[page 58, 59] So again something had to happen in the spiritual worlds in order that this destructive activity should not enter into human life. And this same Being, who later appeared as the Nathan Jesus-child and who (as we have explained) dwelt in earlier times on the Sun and was there permeated by the Christ Being, the sublime Sun-Spirit — this Being went from planet to planet, touched in his innermost nature by the fact that human evolution could go no further, as things were. And this experience affected him so strongly, while he was assuming a form of body on the different planets, that at a certain time during the Atlantean evolution the Spirit of Christ permeated him again. And through what was now brought about by the permeation of this Being by the Christ Spirit, it became possible for moderation to be implanted in the vital organs of man. In the same way that wisdom had been given to the sense-organs, so moderation was now bestowed on the vital organs. Thus it came about that when a man breathed in a particular place, he was not impelled to suck in the air greedily, or to recoil with loathing from the air in another place. That was the deed accomplished in the spiritual worlds through a further permeation of the Nathan Jesus-child by the Christ Being, the high Sun-Spirit.

These first two Sacrifices moderated our senses and vital organs, but our soul-organs of thinking, feeling, and willing were not yet moderated. One can understand the effect of this lack of moderation by reading the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, those Homeric epics from the time before the invention of writing. We can view the excess of will in Agamemnon who stole Achilles' war prize, the lovely Briseis, causing Achilles to withdraw from the Battle of Troy. Many excesses of thinking, feeling, and willing are portrayed in these pre-Mystery-of-Golgotha epics [\(6\)](#).

Our three soul organs originating from the planets needed to be harmonized by the actions of the Sun, Moon, and Earth. This was accomplished by the same Nathan Jesus-child Being during the Third Sacrifice

by the Christ Being.

[page 60, 61] Help for these soul-forces had to be provided from the spiritual world. And now the soul of that Being who later became the Nathan Jesus-child assumed a cosmic form such that his life was in a sense neither on the Moon nor on the Sun, but as though it encircled the Earth and felt a dependence on the influences of Sun, Moon and Earth at the same time. The Earth influences came to him from below; the Sun and Moon influences from above. Clairvoyant observation really sees this Being, in the spring-time of his evolution — if I may use that phrase — in the same sphere as that in which the Moon goes round the Earth. Hence I cannot say exactly that the Moon influence came to him from above, but rather that it came to him from the place where he was, this pre-earthly Jesus-Being. Again there rose to him a cry of distress, a cry that told of what human thinking, feeling and willing were on the way to becoming; and he sought to experience completely in his own inner being this tragedy of human evolution. Thereby he called to himself the high Sun-Spirit, who now for the third time descended upon him, permeating him. So in the cosmic height, beyond the Earth, there was a third permeation of this Nathan Jesus-child by the high Sun-Spirit whom we call the Christ.

There is a wealth of information in pages 62 through 69 answering questions about a plethora of subjects. Why was the Sun and the Ego so important to Zarathustra in the Persian (second cultural) epoch? Why did astrology arrive in the Egypto-Chaldean (third cultural) epoch? Why did the gods arrive during the Greco-Roman (fourth cultural) epoch? How was Apollo connected with St. George? (Both shot arrows into a dragon, Apollo figuratively, St. George literally.) How did the Greek and later Roman gods get their names from the various planets?

But we continue on with the Fourth Sacrifice of Christ in the Mystery of Golgotha, but for which we humans would have never received our unique identity, the name that each one of us can call our "I", our Ego, our eternal spirit. When each one of us say "I exist", we unconsciously acknowledge the gift of the Fourth Sacrifice.

[page 70] We have seen this Being pass through three stages of evolution, and then the Healer, whom Apollo reflected, was born on Earth and men called him Jesus, which in our language means "He who heals through God". He is the Nathan Jesus-child, the one who heals through God, Jehoschua-Jesus.

Now, at this fourth stage, this Being made himself ripe to be enfilled with the Christ Being, with the 'I'. This came to pass through the Mystery of Golgotha. For if this Mystery had not been enacted — if the Being whom we have followed through cosmic ages had not given embodiment to the Christ — then in the course of later time human souls would not have found bodies in which the Ego-force could come to necessary expression on Earth. The Ego had been brought to its highest stage in Zarathustra. The souls who had taken part in the evolution of the Ego would never have found earthly bodies suitable for its further development if the Mystery of Golgotha had not come to pass.

There you have it: you and I today live and enjoy the gift of the Four Sacrifices, each one having brought to us humans a new harmony. Let us give thanks during the Christmas season each year for these marvelous gifts and use them in our lives to help ourselves and others live to the fullest.

[page70, 71] We have now seen the four stages of harmonization: the harmonizing of sense-perception, of the life-organs, of thinking, feeling and willing, and the harmonization in the Ego, this last through the Mystery of Golgotha. You have the connections between the Being who was born as the Nathan Jesus-child and the Christ Being, and the way in which this was prepared. It is now possible, through that which it is permissible to reveal in true Anthroposophy, to understand this kind of growing

together, belonging together, of the Christ Being and the human nature of Jesus. This is possible for us. And a healthy development of spiritual life in the future will depend on this — on it becoming possible for more and more people to grasp that which could not be grasped by the thoughts and ideas of the epoch in which the Mystery of Golgotha was fulfilled.

Through Lectures 4 and 5 Steiner weaves a wonderful and mysterious tale of the search for the Grail, the Holy Vessel upon which stands the name Parsifal. After much seeking in the spiritual world and in exoteric sources, Steiner glimpses the New Moon in the Old Moon's arms and finds the name Parsifal. To understand the following passage, you will need an explication of these two expressions: *ganganda greida* and *viaticum*. Page 144 contains a detailed discussion of *ganganda greida*, which can be summarized as "provisions of nourishment for a journey." The word *viaticum* meant specifically the *provision for the journey from this life to the next*, as it is the name of the consecrated host administered by a priest to someone who is dying.

[page 111] Where, then, is the Grail, which to-day must be found in such a way that the name of Parsifal stands upon it? Where can it be found? Now in the course of my researches it had been shown to me that the name — that is the first thing — must be sought for in the stellar script. And then, on a day which I must regard as specially significant for me, I was shown where the gold-gleaming vessel in its reality is to be found, so that through it — through its symbolical expression in the stellar script — we are led to the secret of the Grail. And then I saw in the stellar script something that anyone can see — only he will not immediately discern the secret. For one day, while I was following with inner sight the gold-gleaming sickle of the moon, as it appeared in the heavens, with the dark moon like a great disc dimly visible within it . . . so that with physical sight one saw the gold-gleaming moon — *ganganda greida*, the journeying *viaticum* — and within it the large Host, the dark disc. This is not to be seen if one merely glances superficially at the moon, but it is evident if one looks closely — and there, in wonderful letters of the occult script, was the name Parsifal!

That, to begin with, was the stellar script. For in fact, if this reading of the stellar script is seen in the right light, it yields for our hearts and minds something — though perhaps not all — of the Parsifal secret, the secret of the Holy Grail.

If we understand that Easter is designated each year as the first Sunday after the first Full Moon after the spring (or vernal) equinox, we can understand why Easter is such a complicated movable feast. Its date is chosen so that one can witness on Good Friday, in accordance with the Parsifal story, the renewal of the Host as it sinks into the Holy Grail to be renewed. (Page 115)

Can we point to the influence of Sybils in the course of history in a more modern time than ancient Greece and Rome? Yes, definitely. In the early fifteenth century Joan, a young peasant girl of Arc, spoke as a Sibyl of the urgent need for an ordained king of France. No one would listen to her at first, so she found a way to take up arms, collect an army around her, and overcome the British force at Orleans. This defeat drove the British out of France and allowed the Dauphin to become a rightfully ordained King of France. Without this 19-year-old woman's courageous efforts, there might be today no country known as France, no French language⁽⁷⁾. I first encountered this understanding when in 2008 I was studying the [Occult History](#) lectures of Rudolf Steiner, which he refers to in this next passage.

[page 119] I want to touch on a manifestation to which I called attention three years ago — three years almost to the day — the transformation of a Sibyl under the influence of the Christ Impulse. In the lectures printed under the title of [Occult History](#), I referred to the appearance of the Maid of Orleans. I pointed out how events of the greatest importance for the destiny of Europe in the subsequent era flowed from what the Maid of Orleans accomplished under the influence of her inspirations, fully permeated by the Christ Impulse, beginning in the autumn of 1428. From external history one can indeed

learn that the destiny of Europe would have been very different if the Maid of Orleans had not appeared when she did, and only an entirely obsessed materialist, such as Anatole France, can deny that something mysterious came into history at that time.

Indeed, the destiny of many countries outside of Europe would have been different. Thousands of place names in North America would be drastically different today but for Joan saving France from absorption by Britain, especially in Quebec and South Louisiana. It pains me to imagine the French Quarter of New Orleans being named English Place! Or Louisiana being named Henriana. Or New Orleans being named New Harrogate.

Clearly Steiner saw Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, as a modern Sybil.

[page 120] I will not repeat here what can be read in history-books; anyone who has listened to these lectures can see that something like a modern Sibyl emerged in the Maid of Orleans. It was the time — the fifteenth century — when the fifth post-Atlantean (our current cultural) epoch begins; a time when the Christ Impulse had to emerge more and more from the subconscious depths of the soul. We can see in what a gentle, tender form, imbued with the noblest qualities of the human soul, the Sibylline power of the Maid of Orleans is revealed.

But what might a man of Joan's time have written about her? Steiner shares with us the words Lord Percival, a man in the entourage of the King whom the Maid of Orleans liberated, wrote to the Duke of Milan carefully describing her achievements:

[page 120, 121] This and much more has the Maid brought about, and with God's help she will accomplish still greater things. The girl is of appealing beauty and manly bearing; she speaks little and shows remarkable sagacity; when she speaks she has a pleasing, delicately feminine voice. She eats little and abstains from wine. She takes pleasure in fine horses and weapons and admires well-accountered and noble men. To be obliged to meet and converse with large numbers of people is abhorrent to her; her tears often overflow; she loves a happy face, endures unheard of toil, and is so assiduous in the manipulation and bearing of weapons that she remains uninterruptedly for six days — day and night — in full armour. She says that the English have no right to France, and therefore — as she says — God has sent her to drive them out and conquer them, but only after previous warning. For the King she shows the deepest veneration; she says He is beloved by God, is under special protection, and will therefore be preserved. Of the Duke of



Orleans, your nephew, she says that he will be delivered in a miraculous way, but only after a demand for his release has been made to the English who hold him prisoner.

With that, revered Duke, I bring my report to a conclusion. Still more wonderful things are happening and. have happened than I can write of or describe to you in words. While I write this, the aforesaid Maid has already gone to the neighborhood of the city of Rheims in Champagne, whither the King has hastily set off for his anointing and crowning under God's protection. Most respected and powerful Duke and greatly honored master! I commend myself to you in all humility, while praying the Almighty to protect you and fulfil your desires. Written at Biteromis, the 21st day of June (in the year 1429).

Your humble servant

Percival,

**Lord of Bonlamiulk,
Counselor and Chamberlain
of the King of the French and
of the Duke of Orleans,
Seneschal of Berry.**

In the Christmas season, we can give thanks for the Four Sacrifices of Christ, and in the Easter Season we

can give thanks for the Grail Mystery which is reenacted in the sky every Good Friday. The secrets of the spiritual world are not hidden from us, but are writ large in the Heavens which surround us, if only we know how to find them.

----- *Footnotes* -----

Footnote 1.

Cleansed means rewritten by materialist-minded theologians to remove all reference to spiritual worlds and thus neutering the meaning of "Gnosis." With the discovery of unexpurgated texts in the Dead Sea scrolls, authentic Gnosis writings are now available, but are discredited by most theologians.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)

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**Footnote 2.**

One should note that the word "cosmos" as Steiner uses it does not mean "universe". *Cosmos* refers to what materialists call our "Solar System." Its origin is explained by them using the Kant-Laplace theory of a cosmic nebula which magically, *without an agent*, begins turning and out of which our Sun and planets coalesce and evolve.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)

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Footnote 3.

This is an application of my Rule #23: *When learning a new subject, it's best to know all about it before you start.* You *must* learn how our cosmos evolved before you can understand the folly of the Kant-Laplace theory of our solar system's evolution and the folly of Darwin's evolution of humankind.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)

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**Footnote 4.**

Meaning a *convenient untruth*.

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Footnote 5.

The subject of these pre-Mystery of Golgotha sacrifices of Christ can be also found in these volumes: [The Four Sacrifices of Christ](#) and [The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric](#).

[Return to text directly before Footnote 5.](#)

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**Footnote 6.**

A similar observation can be made about early myths and legends, in which many examples of excesses of thinking, feeling, and willing are described. Humans today can feel that the ancient gods of the Greeks, for example, were always getting angry (excess of will), using skewed thinking, and showing excessive sentimentality (feeling). We are able to avoid these excesses only because our own three soul-organs of thinking, feeling, and willing have been harmonized by this Third Sacrifice.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 6.](#)

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Footnote 7.

The impact of this came to me one night as I listened to the Captain of the Krewe of Joan of Arc Parade speak as I was sitting above Mary's Ace Hardware Store in the New Orleans French Quarter. I thought, with a shiver going through me: but for Joan, there would be no French Quarter, no New Orleans, and no Louisiana named after a later French king.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 7.](#)

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